

The Ugly Angels' Memorial Foundation

History Newsletter

Vol. 2, No. 2, August 2003



It's been a long time since we had a History Newsletter but this issue sort of came together that way. First we had the departure of two members of the Class of 65. Then we have what looks like an almost final plan for the Okie II Reunion in October, which is bound to be historic. Another piece of history occurred this week when the Board of Directors unanimously voted Lew Barnes to be the next and third president of the UAMF. Genuine recorded history has been forwarded to us from former Captain Dick Moser who reports his side of the *Navy Cross that wasn't to be* episode plus a reprint from a book describing Ugly participation in Operation Colorado and excerpts from his own diary during the 66-67 phase of our history. There is also some current news doing with online access to your records and how the young fellows are doing with the Heavies in HMH-362. I will begin with our 2 most recent RTBs. (i.e. return to base, aviator euphemism for death)

As you have probably observed, the newsletter has a life of it's own. I simply receive messages, edit them and put them in some sort of order. In an earlier edition I mentioned that Lieutenant Colonel Jim Aldworth, the CO who brought the Ugly's back to Vietnam in 65, had been sick and was in the hospital. In the last issue there were two stories about the Skipper; one from Ed Creamer and the other from Muddy Waters. When I was assembling the newsletter, I thought to myself that the two stories were so good that I hope Jim wouldn't think I was writing his obituary.

After sending out the last newsletter, Madilyn, the dogs, and I went outside and cooked some hamburgers. We were almost finished supper when the phone rang. It was Kitty. She said, "We lost Jim today." She went on to apologize for not answering my request for their status but then told me how they had gotten the print copy of the newsletter the previous day and how much they had enjoyed the two stories. He had said "Well, I didn't get the eagles but that's how things are. We're getting well now and we have a long life yet to live." That morning they were having breakfast and Kitty went to get him some more coffee and he went over.

It was my great pleasure to meet them both last year as I am sure it was a pleasure for many of you to have served under him. Below is the formal obituary notice and a report from Robbie, who also retired as a Lieutenant Colonel, and represented us at the cemetery.

Almost immediately after learning of the Colonel's death, we received the equally sad news that Bobby Gene Rehders, crew chief of YL 47, also from the Class of 65 had passed away. I got two letters within hours from his buddies Pete King, squadron pilot and Ed Chenkus, C/C of YL 38 with this information as well as a strong indication of what a pal Bob had been to both of them of and on for almost 40 years. More after the news about The Skipper

Lt. Col. Jim Aldworth

Lt. Col. James Aldworth, 81, of Hilton Head Plantation died Friday, June 20. A native of Cape May, N.J., he was the son of the late Charles and Margaret O'Hara Aldworth.

He was a graduate of Oklahoma State University and received his master's degree from Stony Brook University. He retired from Grumman Aerospace in 1987. A U.S. Marine aviator for 25 years, he served his country in combat in World War II, the Korean War and was commanding officer of the HMM-362 "Ugly Angels" in the Vietnam War.

He and his wife, Kitty, moved to Hilton Head Island in 1988. Survivors include his wife, Kitty Kiley Aldworth; three daughters, Betsy Franks of Atlanta, Susan Aldworth of New York, N.Y., and Kathy Dollymore of Silver Spring, Md.; two sons-in-law, Art Franks and John Dollymore; and four grandchildren, Kiley, James and Caroline Dollymore and Patrick Franks.

Visitation was at 10 a.m. Tuesday, June 24th at St. Francis By the Sea Catholic Church, followed by a Mass of Christian burial at 11 a.m. Lt. Col. Aldworth was buried at Beaufort National Cemetery with full military honors.

Memorials may be made to St. Jude's Children's Hospital, P.O. Box 3704, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38173.

Report of "Robbie" Robertson

The day was bright and sunny, warm, but with low humidity so that it was relatively pleasant for the unpleasantness. I met the funeral procession at the Beaufort National Cemetery. This cemetery was established during the War Between The States as a final resting place for soldiers of both sides of the conflict and is a fitting site for a warrior's grave. The entourage included the family and friends who made the trip from Hilton Head Island. The ceremonial burial detail from Paris Island was led by a woman Lieutenant Colonel who presented Mrs. Aldworth with the burial flag. The detail consisted of the pallbearers, the firing squad, and a live bugler to play Taps. As you may know, many National Cemeteries have gone to recorded Taps. At any rate, the ceremony was as touching as ever.

After the ceremony, I approached Mrs. Aldworth, introduced myself, and told her that I was there on behalf of the officers and men of HMM 362. She was visibly touched and offered, "That was so important to him; he loved that squadron". She expressed gratitude for the support that the "Angels" provided.

Mrs. Aldworth confirmed the circumstances of the Colonels' death. He was recovering nicely from his recent illness and regaining his strength. On Friday morning, they had breakfast and the Colonel asked Kitty to get him another cup of coffee. As she rose from the table, he, "just keeled over onto the table and was gone". Mrs Aldworth expressed gratitude that he went fast and didn't suffer a lingering illness. (Isn't that the way we'd all like to go?). She seems to be doing well.

I appreciate the opportunity to represent the Squadron at this remarkable man's passing and to let his widow know that we have not forgotten his contribution to our collective history.

Bobby Gene Rehders, Crew Chief of YL-47, 65-66 From Ed Chenkus, Crew Chief of YL-38, 65-66

The death of Col Jim was one hell of a shock to me, then another one came and hit me right between the eyes. Yesterday morning I rec'd a phone call that was really a downer, my very close and best friend in the Corp had died, his name was Bob Rehders. He was the Crew Chief of YL-47. We had known each other over the course of 20 yrs in the Corp. When I got that bad news, I called Pete King. Pete, Bob and I were one Hell of a team in Nam !

Semper Fi
Ed Chenkus
C/C YL-38

And from Pete...

With great sadness I write to tell you that my friend Bob Rehders passed away this morning (June 26, 2003) in Texas. He was a member of the class of '65-'66 under Lt Col. Jim Aldworth. Bob was one damn fine Marine and crew chief. Think he was 73. He had suffered for several years with both heart and lung problems. Life was worthwhile as long as he could play golf -- which I know he was doing at least as recently as last fall when I was there. Even more significant was his 56+ year marriage to his wife Nell (a sainted woman to be sure & tolerant). They had returned to their childhood home in Corsicana after he retired from the service. Many good memories -- I'll miss him !

Semper Fi,
Pete King

And another from Ed.....

Hi Bob, Can't say much more about Bob than what Pete has already plus what I had told you. We served together off and on over the course of 20 yrs. We came together for the last time with HMM-362, April 65, to Sept. 66. Bob took an Inter-service transfer into Army CID as an W.O. and retired after 22 yrs. We lost track of each other at this time and didn't see each other for more than 25 yrs, If it had not been for Pete King finding where Bob was located, we would never had known that we were both alive and kicking. After that we kept in touch on a weekly basis by phone and E-mail, He and his wife Nell had come by for a one or two day visit this past April on their way north to spend time with family, I'm glad that we were able to get to see each other one more time, I'm going to miss him very much, Our friend-ship was a very unusual one! He being from TX, me being from Jersey, I called him a Texas Steer, he called me a Jersey Hood, we became the best of buddies and it goes without saying, we would have given our lives for each other. Along with Pete he was my very best friend. I will never forget him.
SF. Ed Chenkus Ugly Angel

Bob Rehders was buried in the new military cemetery in Fort Worth, Texas on the 30th of June. It happened quickly and without notice. Regret-tably neither Ed Chenkus nor I were able to be there! His bride of 56 years told me that she didn't think the young Marines at the ceremony looked quite as sharp as the one she had lost. He will be missed.

Cards and remembrances can be sent to Mrs Rehders at 1923 NW County Rd. 1040, Corsicana, TX 75110.

Editor's Note: Like Paul Harvey and The Rest of the Story

So I read all of these letters and started to wonder what was going on and being a brilliant journalist, I asked a few pointed questions; like what were two old salt buck sergeants (35 and 37, respectively) doing being best friends with a brand new MARCAD lieutenant (24 years of age). You know, like who was using who or whatever. And you know, the two remaining members, Ed and Pete won't say anything other than something about spiritual advisor and statue of limitations. Someday, Tom is going to let me stop writing this stuff and I am gonna write a movie about these three.

Even Uglier than the First Two

This past week, the Board of Directors unanimously elected Lew Barnes as the next president. His term will be for 3 years if everything goes all right. Lew comes from a long heritage of military giants, having graduated from the same school system as Willie Sproule, although there was a differential of 50 or 60 years.

After graduating from grade school, Lew enlisted and eventually became an H-34 crew chief, serving as an Ugly at the very end; Phu Bai in 69. He is presently CEO of Summit Fabrication in the Portland Oregon area and made a lot of us some really nice license plate holders for our bright red trucks. What really has distinguished Lew and pretty well insured his election was his work organizing the last reunion and, more notably, his work on bringing our Memorial, THE WING, at Quantico to completion. Lew was also HMIC of the tail wheel pin ceremony at Pensacola in 98 for which he and his cohorts were made permanent 2nd lieutenants.

Lew succeeds Rusty Sachs, the second president and Tom Hewes who sort of invented the whole thing. We wish Lew all the luck he might need.

Houghton and the Radio Man, Version 2 (the HAC)

Returning to Ky Ha from a day's worth of flying – Dick Moser, HAC; Dick Houghton, crew chief; Copilot and gunner unknown – we were fragged to add one UH-34 to a flight of 4 Hueys from the other side of the base, on their way to pick up a Marine platoon. Our wingman continued home and we hooked up with the Huey flight. According to the Huey flight leader, the Marines had run into VC out south and west of Chu Lai. Casualties were light and mobile, but the Marines were in close contact and the LZ would be hot.

The LZ was a flooded rice paddy. As the Hueys and our 34 touched down, the Marines emerged from the tree line on our right, racing, as best they could, for the aircraft and shooting back over their shoulders into the trees. We couldn't tell whether they were being shot at or not, but they were reacting that way.

As each aircraft loaded it lifted from the zone to rendezvous above – the Hueys first – and we were the last to load. Just as the last of the Marines climbed through the cargo door we saw that the radioman, who had been with the Marines' platoon leader, the last to head for the helicopter, had slipped off the paddy dike and was floundering, waist-deep in mud, about 20 yards from us and 10 yards from the tree line. Everyone else was on board.

Before anyone else could react to the situation, Houghton vaulted out the door and was running across the dike to the stuck Marine. I have the picture in my mind of Houghton racing across the dike and firing his sidearm into the trees, but I can't say, now, that it's an accurate picture. I do know that he reached the radioman, picked him up in a fireman's carry, and ran with him back to the bird.

As soon as they were aboard we lifted off, only to discover that the Huey flight had already left for Ky Ha! They had left us alone in the LZ! I didn't know whether I was more pissed at the Huey flight leader for abandoning us or at Houghton for leaving the aircraft, but I did know that I had just witnessed an act of remarkable bravery.

We landed at Ky Ha and discharged our passengers, after which I made a bee line for the Huey squadron's ready room. I charged in looking for the Huey flight leader and ready to fight. Fortunately, he wasn't there and cooler heads prevailed – after appropriate apologies and a weak explanation that they had simply forgotten that they had a fifth helicopter in the flight.

Deciding to forget about Houghton's indiscretion and focus on his bravery, I started a write-up recommending him for a Navy Cross. (I was the squadron awards officer.) To make the recommendation stick, I wanted to include a statement from the infantry platoon commander, who had started across the paddy with the radioman and who had watched the entire affair from the helicopter cabin. Word came back from the infantry unit that the platoon commander wouldn't give us a statement and denied that anything like what we were describing had happened, which eventually resulted in Houghton's citation being downgraded to, I think, a bronze star. It should have been more.

(Editor's Note-Navy Commendation with V)

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HMM 362 Oklahoma II Reunion

An opportunity to fly with your family in the same aircraft you flew in combat 30 plus years ago !!

Oklahoma II Reunion plans are set. This reunion promises to be a one of a kind experience for Archie's Angel's and Ugly Angel Marines. We will have reunion registration from 1000 hours to 1600 hours Friday, 10 October. At 1730 hours a cocktail hour begins at the Embassy Suites Ballroom. At 1800 hours a buffet sit down dinner at the Embassy Suites Ballroom where we will hear the latest from our esteemed squadron leaders and friends. After dinner everyone is invited to the Embassy Suites 2nd floor Atrium for refreshments and more socializing (isn't that why we do this to begin with). Bring your photo's, stories and tall tales. All are welcome, family and friends too.

The Friday dinner consists of tossed Garden Salad with choice of dressings, Caesar Salad with garlic croutons and freshly grated cheeses. Three main courses of Breast of Chicken Marsala and mushrooms, Fettuccini Alfredo and Nut Encrusted Tilapia with Basil Beurre Rouge. Wild Rice Pilaf & Garlic Whipped Potatoes and a Vegetable Medley round out the courses. Dessert and freshly brewed coffee, decaf and iced tea will be served and a cash bar for alcoholic beverages. Cash bar will open at 1730 hours and dinner will be served at 1800 hours.

At 1030 hours Saturday morning we all gather at Gerald Hail's place for a full program and meeting at the YL-37 Group Hanger. A barbecue luncheon will be served at the hanger at 1300. Afterward we will be conducting flight operations aboard YL-37, our fully restored combat aircraft. YES...we will have the

opportunity to fly aboard the old hanger queen again 30 plus years after the Vietnam wars conclusion. There will be ample time between dinners and programs to spend time with our old comrades in arms and talk about the days we spent in the furnace and what our lives have been since. Catching up as it were on old friends is really what we like to do. Saturday evening again, we will gather at the Embassy Suites 2nd Floor Atrium for some socializing and story telling. All are welcome

The Saturday barbecue will consist of three different main courses which will be Chicken, Brisket and Ribs. Baked Beans, Potatoes Salad, plenty of bread and a Cobbler for dessert.

On Sunday morning (12 October) everyone is invited for a last farewell to the YL-37 Group Hanger and then it is home again until next time.

Remember that Friday and Saturday evenings there will be informal gatherings at the Embassy Suites 2nd Floor Atrium for all squadron members, family and friends.

Please send checks covering your Friday dinner and the Saturday Barbecue payable to the "Ugly Angels Fund". Checks should be sent to: Mark Stanton, 45 Villanova Lane, Dix Hills, New York 11746. Please enclose a list indicating exactly who will be attending the dinner and BBQ. Total for each person to attend both activities is \$50.00. That includes everything and should assure everyone of having a well fed time. It is a must to have your checks in by the end of August so we can make final payments to the Embassy Suites and the caterer at the YL-37 Group Hanger.

At OKIE II we will have the opportunity to take that "Special Flight in YL-37" which is a rare happening. In addition we will have some active duty Marine aircraft attending with their crews on Saturday. It is rare that Marines get a chance to fly in an aircraft in combat and then fly in that same combat aircraft again as a civilian. That is what is going to be happening at OKIE II as well as having a group of Marine Air activities and Marines both active and retired in the same place and time. A senior Marine Corps guest of honor will be present as well as some junior officers and enlisted to talk about the current state of our beloved Corps.

If you haven't done so already, please make your hotel and air fare reservations pronto. Embassy Suites contact is Ms. Angela Holden and she can be reached at 918-622-4000. For those of you who have RV's you can drive to OKIE II and stay at the Hail ranch since there are 30 some acres for parking and RV use. Call Mark Stanton for details.

Please feel free to call with any questions; Mark Stanton, 800-694-0400 daytime and 631-462-6142 evenings.

Semper Fi,
Mark Stanton

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Operation Colorado- also from Dick Moser

Operation Colorado took place in August of 1966. It was notable, in part, because it was the only operation during my tour (at least the only one I can remember) that moved east to west, preventing the VC from escaping freely into the hills. That gave it its second notable characteristic: significant and heavy engagement.

Helicopter support for Colorado was run out of Tam Ky, the provincial capital. Although Tam Ky wasn't all that far from Ky Ha, the parade ground in front of the regional hq building was a lot closer to the action.

The following is excerpted from "Small Unit Action in Vietnam, Summer 1966" a Marine Corps publication written by Captain Francis J. West. After several pages describing the major ground action, West talks about the Ugliers.

Sullivan [infantry commander] turned responsibility for the casualties over to Gilliland, whose platoon carried them to a rice paddy marked as a landing zone. Suitably, a landing zone must be secure -- free from hostile fire -- before the helicopters can land. But large, lumbering craft though the H-34 troop helicopter is, it can be surprisingly difficult to destroy, as events were to show.

It was still raining but the ceiling had risen enough for the medical evacuation helicopters to come in, provided they were not shot out of the air.

The troops on the ground tried to clean an area; it just couldn't be done. The battalion command group were still using rifles and the 106mm recoilless rifle platoon was shooting snipers out of trees. The three rifle companies were fighting tooth and nail. There was no respite. The Hueys were striking targets by popping smoke grenades, only to have the enemy follow suit. A Marine would pitch a yellow smoke grenade and no sooner would it billow than a half dozen clouds of yellow would filter from the surrounding hedgerows. Sullivan resorted to the SOP established for such emergencies. The troops would heave a combination of different colored grenades and the pilots would identify over the radio the color schemes. Notified when they had seen the right combination, the Hueys could bear in. Their presence suppressed enemy fire, but the minute they flew off, the North Vietnamese emerged from their holes and resumed the battle.

As Gilliland gathered the casualties, he knew their only chance of being flown out depended on the skill and courage of the H-34 pilots. If they came in, they would do so virtually unprotected.

Of the four H-34s which conducted the medical mission, two were shot down, neither over the battlefield itself, and a crew chief was killed. The first craft in, piloted by Captain Lee, had been wracked by fire. Crippled after running a gauntlet of crossfires, it fluttered back to base headquarters two miles south at Tam Ky, where it sputtered out altogether. The second craft was luckier. First Lieutenant Ellis Laitala dropped his bird down to 200 feet and still could not see the nose of the helicopter. He tried twice more to find a break in the cloud cover and finally succeeded, only to run into fire. The enemy had had ample time to prepare for his arrival after he had clattered over the landing zone a few times and when he did cut through the rainy mist, they had a .30 caliber machine gun talking. Laitala's copilot, First Lieutenant Richard Moser, saw a burst of tracers zip by his right window chest high. [He has me in the wrong seat, but the rest is true. Ellie was HAC in the right seat; I was H2P in the left.] Turning to tell Laitala the enemy was zeroed in, he saw another burst streak by the left [it was the right] window.

"It's a good thing that buy didn't hold one long burst," he said.

Laitala made 10 trips to bring in ammunition and first-aid dressings and to evacuate casualties. On each approach and take-off he received fire. He put his helicopter through a series of desperate gyrations each time to shake off the streams of tracers, pitting flying skill against marksmanship.

[On one trip, a dirty and grizzled grunt climbed up on the left strut, stuck his head through the window, kissed me on the cheek and said "God bless you guys!"]

The third pilot to land shared Lee's fate. Major Raymond Duvall's craft was hit repeatedly. During the two hours he was flying in the area, he flew through more concentrated fire than he had seen in all his 11 previous months in Vietnam. Despite the intensity of that fire, Duvall refused to allow his gunners to open up. In this area, and at dusk, it was difficult to distinguish the Marine positions from those of the enemy. A wild machine gun burst, if the helicopter suddenly rocked, could kill Marines just as quickly as North Vietnamese. What finally forced him down was a hit in the rotor blade. The torn hole caused a terrible shrieking noise with every revolution of the blade and the troops on the ground were sure he would crash. But, like Lee, Duvall managed to wobble back to Tam Ky.

Among the helicopters, though, the one most memorable to Gilliland and the troops of Bravo Company was YL54. "I'll never forget that one," Gilliland said. "I don't know how he did it. He should have been nailed a dozen times."

Captain Robert J. [Padre] Sheehan was flying YL54 in an exceptional manner. Ordinarily, a helicopter is traveling through the air at a speed of 80 to 90 knots when it approaches a landing zone. Sheehan hit the landing zone doing 115 knots -- to a layman this difference may not seem like much but Sheehan's copilot, First Lieutenant Marshall Morris, explained:

"They had our altitude pegged. I'd say if we were going 5 knots slower, they'd have had us. Captain Sheehan really revved it up and just plain outran the tracers. It was a speed I know I couldn't do."

In a conversation later, however, Sheehan himself was quick to point out that landing an H-34 helicopter could not be a one-man show.

"It's a team effort," he said, "like a rifle squad. The crew chief checks out the side door to make sure the tail is clear of obstructions when we come in. The gunner has to suppress hostile fire. The copilot backs up the pilot at all times. The copilot doesn't grab the controls, but he palms them, like with kid gloves. If the pilot is hit on landing and the copilot is daydreaming, the bird would probably crash."

On his first trip in, Sheehan picked up eight wounded and headed out south at treetop level. He flew straight into a wall of bullets, one of which hit the carburetor. Sheehan quickly pulled right and the tracers fell behind. The hostile fire was like that on each of the nine trips he made and the helicopter was struck on three separate occasions. On the second trip, his gunner, Sergeant J. B. Jensen, was hit but the round ricocheted off his thick pilot's flack jacket. Sheehan allowed his gunners to fire and he could actually see their rounds finding targets. Jensen spun two enemy soldiers completely around with one long burst of his M60 machine gun while the crew chief, Lance Corporal Baker, dropped another who was crouched in a trench.

Altogether, Sheehan flew in 2,400 pounds of ammunition and 400 pounds of battle dressings and took out 20 casualties. The last evacuation proved the most difficult. Coming in, Sheehan attracted fire from all directions. Some enemy were hidden not more than 50 yards from the helicopter, whose occupants could see the hostile positions much more clearly than could the Marines on the ground. But all the linked cartridges for the machine guns had been used up. Their plight seemed so bad Baker swung himself out the helicopter door onto the steel lift step and returned fire with a .38 pistol. A Navy corpsman named King, along to attend the casualties, saw this and said "_____ it, I'd better get out there, too." With that he leaned out and began to fire his .45.

Sheehan put down and the infantrymen brought up a casualty. They shouted, "Two more are coming!" Sheehan jerked his thumb up in the air to signal he understood and would wait. And wait he did, for a full five minutes while the North Vietnamese tried frantically to destroy YL54. Tracers were whining by at all angles, like a swarm of angry bees. From the village outside Sullivan's perimeter came the fire helicopter pilots hate most, that of .50 caliber machine guns speaking in tandem. The tracers rushed by in streams. Sheehan watched the paddy dike to his left front shred away. The foliage on a nearby hedgerow fell away like leaves in an October wind.

Across a paddy, a group of Marines struggled forward, half-dragging, half-lugging two wounded wrapped in ponchos. Sheehan remembered thinking it would be a good idea to carry a number of stretchers in his helicopter when he went to the assistance of Marines in the future, if there were a future for YL54. He was not going to leave without those two Marines but he thought the furious fires would reach him before they did. Gilliland shared that belief and stared at the stubborn helicopter in amazement. It sat, and was pounded by bullets in the belly, and sat some more, until the two wounded had reached it. Then Sheehan whirled away and Gilliland vowed to remember that helicopter.

Once airborne and heading south, Sheehan called over the intercom to check on his men. "Hey," he said, "how are you guys doing back there?" "Hell, Captain," came the cheeky reply, "we're having a ball."

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Maybe Useful Information - NPRC Initiates Online Records Request Procedures

The National Personnel Records Center is working to make it easier for veterans with computers and Internet access to obtain copies of documents from their military files. Military veterans and the next of kin of deceased former military members may now use a new online military personnel records system to request documents. Other individuals with a need for documents must still complete the Standard Form 180, which can be downloaded from the online web site.

The new web-based application was designed to provide better service on these requests by eliminating the records center's mailroom processing time. Also, because the requester will be asked to supply all information essential for NPRC to process the request, delays that normally occur when NPRC has to ask veterans for additional information will be minimized. Veterans and next of kin may access this application at <http://vetrecs.archives.gov>. Please note there is no requirement to type "www" in front of the web address. Point of contact is Lyn Krout, linda.krout@us.army.mil, DSN 458-1755 or commercial 410-306-1755

What's Happening with the New Angels?

BARBERS POINT, ISLAND OF OAHU, Hawaii (June 17, 2003) -- BARBERS POINT - Twenty Marines from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 362 carried out some infrequent training while en route to transport more than 75 U.S. Marines and Australian soldiers from the "Big Island" into the airfield at MCB Hawaii, Kaneohe Bay.

With the assistance of one KC-130 Hercules transport aircraft from Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 152, five CH-53D Sea Stallion helicopters from HMH-362 conducted a rapid ground refueling exercise here, June 17.

"The Marines are unfamiliar with this type of exercise because there are no KC-130s Hercules transport aircraft in Hawaii," said Capt Lee K. Clare, fragmentary officer, Marine Air Group 24.

During the rapid ground refueling exercise, the KC-130 - predominantly used for aircraft refueling - landed, but didn't shut off its engines. Equipped with a special hose system that contains three to four fueling stations, the KC-130 proceeded to fuel the helicopters while they were running.

"They're a mobile gas station that allow aircraft to travel twice the distance than it would travel on one tank of gas," said Clare. "When we deploy, we train with other groups that have fixed wing assets, and we have to be ready to work together to accomplish all of the Marine Corps missions. This training really lets us build our comfort level."

During any refueling exercise, risks are assumed, but for the most part the operation is safe, said Lance Cpl. Marcus Whiffill, crewman, VMGR-152. "The crew and pilots are well-trained to handle any problems that may arise," said Whiffill. "Also, there are fire extinguishers at each of the fueling stations."

Afterward, the Ugly Angels delivered the service members onto the airfield, and the allies were able to raid it and complete their mission of seizing the airfield, flawlessly.

"It is aerial support like the kind provided today that allows ground allied forces to achieve any mission tasked to them," said a soldier from 1st Royal Australian Regiment.

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Excerpts from the Diary of Dick Moser

14 July, 1966 -- Capt. Russ Randall departed for CONUS.

31 Julv. 1966 -- Last night about 12:20 heard 10 rounds fired nearbv. It was

a sentry trying to stop 4 HMM-364 officers from driving a road grader. Light day for the squadron. Officers had a beer 'n burgers party tonight, celebrating Maj. Bray's birthday. 2 new pilots -- Ron Fix and Sonny Morris.

1 August, 1966 -- Capt. Lee and Gary McClaskey cracked one up today. Lost a tail rotor right after an external drop at Hill 76.

3 August, 1966 -- Capt. Wheeler and Maj. Armstrong picked up an F-4 driver who punched out 1 mi south of Chu Lai.

4 August, 1966 -- Cpts Bracy, Cook, Van Lieu and Hippert had a we4tting-down party, attended by all officers. Music by a combo of squadron personnel.

27 August, 1966 -- Flew a .8 recon retraction, 18 men from a mined zone. Hill slope was 45 degrees or better so we had to hover with left wheel down and right nearly 5' in the air and pull them into the plane.

30 August -- Squadron officers had a party at the new O Club tonight. Highlight was a skit by Dave Luhrsen and Mon Cochran. Col. Garotto leaves tomorrow. Major M.B. Armstrong assumes command. Major Armstrong has been with the squadron for several weeks now. His willingness to learn from experienced pilots and to fly any mission has impressed us all.

31 August -- Change of command. All hands party in the afternoon. Many square inches of abraded skin as enlisted took out frustrations by throwing officers in the ocean. A good relaxing day for everybody. Rob Cook punched out Dave Luhrsen after a "discussion". Lurch wisely failed to retaliate.

2 September -- Operations in the foothills south of the Son Tra Bong and west of Ba Gia. Captains Sheehan and Hippert launched night medevac 10 miles south of Quang Ngai. Took a hit at 2500', a 30-caliber round that came in under the gunner's seat and hit a full ammo box. It dislodged 1 slug from its cartridge and bent a link, but the gunner was really lucky. It literally saved his ass.

Vignere and I reconstituted night med while they were gone. Launched to get "emergency" case SW of Hill 76. He ran to the plane -- said he "felt a little dizzy". We received fire coming out.

19 September -- Called out from Chu Lai SAR to look for a British crew that had crashed. Found pilots in a clearing, one in a chute, one still strapped in his ejection seat, both KIA. (Found out later that their a/c had inverted spin tendencies, speculate they punched out inverted just before crashing. Manuvering the plane to keep from billowing the chute, on the right, I forgot to look for trees on the left and we found ourselves momentarily IFR in leaves. Crew had to exit a/c to cut pilots loose from chute/seat. When we returned to Chu Lai and shut down we heard a whistling noise. All four blades were damaged, two with bent spars. Miraculously, the rotor had stayed perfectly balanced, which is why we didn't feel anything in flight. We downed the bird and said a quiet prayer of thanks that it hadn't self-destructed from rotor imbalance.

September 26 - October 7, 1966 -- Late on the 26th we received mount-out orders, packed on the 27th and loaded on the Iwo Jima on the 28th. Enroute to Okinawa plans were changed, so we off-loaded to Futema on 1 October. Reloaded to Valley Forge 5 October, sailed w/BLT for the Phillipines on the 6th. Notable work by Dick Jesse in re-outfitting the squadron in only 2

days.

8 October, 1966 -- Rehearsal for upcoming exercise, Hilltop. First troop lift off the carrier -- 16 a/c lead by Major Armstrong. Density altitude over 2400' and no wind. Loads of 1425 pound howtar rounds were a disaster, as were 6 troops. Eric Cederbloom came within a few feet of a water landing when he lost turns taking off overloaded. Skipper went into Cubi Point with a rough runner on the second wave. Liberty tonight in the 'Po with Don Hirsch.

10 October, 1966 -- USS Valley Forge, Mindoro, PI. Operation Hilltop VII, landing exercise, HMM-362 and BLT 3/26. 35 - 40 heat casualties in BLT. Jim Richmond made the Valley's 37,000th landing.

12 October -- Backloaded BLT in just over 6 hours. Smooth operation. Major Lewis in YL-35 had to set down on the northern end of Mindoro in a swamp. Engine was failing. The bird was left there. Maintenance crews will go out later to attempt repairs. Upped anchor about dark to sail for Subic.

14 October -- action at the Cubi Club. Flaming hookers claimed Snee's eyebrows and Hippert's right cheek. Most first put out with champagne.

18 October -- exercise designated Operation Mudpuppy, practice for riverine support. YL-33 (Bertke and ?) wet down in a school yard at Selang, Luzon with a transmission light caused by a sheared accessory drive shaft. A/C sent to recover them failed to return.

19 October -- Flew to Selang, found lost crews, who had stayed all night in the schoolhouse next to the downed bird when weather prevented their return to the ship.

20 October, 1966 -- Major Lewis made the Valley's 38,000th landing.

23 October, 1966 -- Rolled out to General Quarters this AM at 3. Two ships collided in Manila Bay and they wanted helicopters ready for SAR. Launched at 7 for Sangley to help out, but had to down 4 birds (water in the ASE box) and didn't get out until 9:30

24 October -- Major Gordon's wetting-down party. Sailing for RVN tomorrow

27 October -- Da Nang harbor. Pete Burt and Dave Kury busted a plane on the beach north of Da Nang. Nobody hurt, but they drove a strut through the fuselage.

29 October - 2 November -- Moved from the Valley to the Iwo, after several false starts and changes in orders.

4 November -- Da Nang harbor, still. Local instrument hops. Major Gordon diverted from one and returned mad as hell. He was sent to the Thomaston to pick up an important package. Turned out to be two badminton raquets for a Lt(jg) on the Iwo.

6 November -- Recreation day. At hangar deck boxing smoker 362's boxing team ored 2 wins and a tie. Wins by Granger and Williams, a tie by Cantrell. Coach, SSgt Carter, turned out so many boxers that the couldn't find opponents for them all. The team will continue and could become a great source of pride. The "lizard stool" stood in our corner.

7 November -- Official car quals. Capt Jim Hippert logged the Iwo's 30,000th landing as Joel Vignere missed again by one, his fourth miss by that margin.

8 November -- Squadron moved to USS Vancouver, an LPD. Challenging to get all on board. Vancouver to be our ride to the Philippines, where we'll offload and wait for the Iwo to return with clean fuel tanks.

10 November - 3 January -- on the Vancouver in Subic until 13 December. Lots of liberty time in the 'Po. Lt. Col. Armstrong's wetting down party (also Moser, Noll and others) highlighted by the presence of his beautiful and gracious wife.

Moved to the Iwo on 17 December, Operation Mudpuppy II with new BLT (1/9) 18 - 23 December. Back to port for Christmas. Sailed on 30 December for Deckhouse V, southeast of Saigon, off Vung Tau. Super secret operation was announced by Phillipine radio with all details, just after we sailed.

Sadly, that's where my diary ends.

Please, if you have one, get it to us, edited or otherwise. We can eventually build a timeline and fill in the blanks. Editor Bob

Prehistory – Pop A Smoke Reunion 2004

It doesn't seem possible but already they are posting details of the next, and 10th Pop A Smoke reunion. Tom Hewes, our founder and now Vice President of the parent organization writes all of the details in the latest issue. I haven't looked but details might also be on the website; <http://www.popasmoke.com>. The dates are July 8-10 in Reno. I would strongly urge you to sign up for Pop A Smoke but since their subscription year runs from November 10 to November 9, You might do better to wait until November but then do it.

By the way, if any of you were put off by certain organizational oversights last time in Pensacola, be aware that Tom has taken over and I can assure you that the glitch factor will be down somewhere in the 1/10,000ths. The man even got me organized – in a way.

<http://WWW.HMM362.ORG>

I understand if you think nothing is happening to our website but that is part of the plan. I am actually building several pages right now. The problem is that since everything is interconnected or hyperlinked I need to get a lot of pieces put together first and then add them all at once. Eventually it will look something like this.

History	UAMF	The Memorials
Squadron History	Mission Statement	Quantico
Stories	Constitution or Bylaws	YL 42 at PNS
Timeline	Board Members	YL 37
History Newsletters		
Commanders		

The Men	The Aircraft	News
Archie's Cruise Book	Listed by bu no	Newsletters
Cruise books 66, 68 , others		Sign in sheet
Stories	A page for every a/c	Current events
Diaries	incl. crews, KIA, WIA,	Read & initial
Photos	crashes, stories, and if it's	Reunions
Roster of members	still flying	Whatevers
Articles about individuals		

I don't know what will happen but I plan to make a pretty good dent on this during my vacation. Quite a bit has been done already.

MIA

After several months I have purged the names of many long time readers, both online and in print. We all remember the buddy system. Check now with your buddies and see if they are still getting their newsletters and other announcements, particularly if they have changed addresses. Also, please remember to let me know when your information changes. Lastly, if any of you are running groups of former members of the squadron, no matter the years, let them know I will be glad to add their name to our mailing list.

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Bob Skinder
20 Claytor Rd.
Hopkins, SC 29061
rskinder@att.net
803-783-3019