



# MESTENGO

Volume 21 Issue 3

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Fall 2021



## WHY NOT?

By Mark Blaydes

It seems every time I turn around someone wants to know “Why” or better yet, “What’s in it for me?” Why should I be a member of the Marine Corps Mustang Association? Why should I renew my dues? What do I get out of it?

A very difficult set of questions to answer depending on where you are, your experiences and possible current situation. I can try and give you my Reader’s Digest version. It is only mine because each of us has our own version, our own reasons for joining or not joining.

While stationed back in Cherry Point in 84/85, I read about this new organization, the Mustangs, that was trying to organize and sign-up members. As a Mustang officer of about three years I was proud of my heritage and prouder of the legacy that was out there trying to form up. And so, I did. I became a Charter member of a startup organization. I never asked what was in it for me, only that I was proud to be a part of it. As an active-duty Marine, it was hard to stay engaged in the formation but moral and financial support was just as key to get it off the ground and running. As time went on, I supported the activities as best I could. It was when the Arizona Chapter of the Mustang Association was established that I was really able to put hands on to my membership. It was through this local piece of the National organization that I was able to put the overall purpose to work.

*Continued on Page 4*

**MARINE CORPS MUSTANG  
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**ON THIS DAY...**

July 1, 1920— MajGen John A. LeJeune becomes the 13th  
Commandant.

July 11, 1798— The Marine Corps was re-established by Congress,  
succeeding the Continental Marines.

July 30, 1918—The 1st Marine Aviation Force arrived in France.

August 6, 1847— Marines began their march on the “Halls of  
Montezuma.”

August 13, 1918— Opha M. Johnson enlisted, becoming the first  
woman Marine.

August 29, 1916—The Marine Corps Reserve was founded.

September 2, 1945— Japan formally surrendered aboard the USS  
Missouri.

September 11, 1990— The 4th MEB arrived in the Gulf of Oman in  
support of Operation Desert Shield.

September 26, 1915— “Horse Marines” engaged Haitian bandits near  
Petite Riviere.

## FROM: THE PRESIDENT



*Major Joe Featherston, USMC (Ret)*

Greetings my fellow Mustangs across the country, and around the world.

This note to you comes at the very end of August (literally) as the summer vacation draws to an end and families concentrate on school issues for their children and grandchildren. For most of us senior citizens it is back to a focus on the real world out there, and a challenging world it certainly is.

I am often reminded of the old Marine infantry axiom of “two up, one back, hot chow on the high ground!” as we deal with a continuing battle with Covid variants. Whenever we think we’re past the worst, well maybe not. That translates into a thought process of careful planning for all our interests and events with varied contingencies for unknowns. Specifically, I speak to an efficient election process from start to finish and planning for a 2022 muster reunion in Washington about a year out from this date. It seems that we do take two steps forward and another to the rear. Your officers and board members are exerting their best efforts to keep the MCMA on track in all respects. We love challenges.

From my personal perspective it has been a difficult year. I sense it has been difficult for many of our members as well. If we can be of any help, please reach out to us and communicate the situation. We don’t know what we don’t know. Part of our motivation for joining any group is mutual support and reinforcement when possible. We would appreciate hearing from you.

You will read about the upcoming muster in Washington in commentary from our Business Manager and Vice President as the event draws closer. In this time frame I suggest that you block the dates on your calendar now to avoid missing a great opportunity to re-engage and socialize. It looks like a splendid program and our only real commitment at this point is to guarantee a certain number of banquet seats, a fixed amount, offset by actual member attendance. The goal is a net positive amount with no effect on our treasury. More detailed information is forthcoming by email advice and mail for those indicating that need.

As I write this note, a significant administrative issue facing us is the development of a more modern and efficient MCMA web site for use by our members, and for communication with the outside world. We look at how we can be visible and present our association in the most favorable light possible. Due diligence is required because of attendant costs, and timing, to be able to make decisions and field a completed task ASAP. You will see more on this as it develops.

My constant encouragement to all of our association is to be aware of and recruit just one new member whenever that opportunity presents itself. It truly is our lifeblood for association survival. Additionally, please recognize that we need your personal active interest in the ‘business’ of MCMA and that can really be expressed by raising your hand as an applicant for a board seat or an officer position. We welcome your response.

My very best wishes to all of the Mustang community for a happy, healthy and rewarding Fall season. Stay in touch with us. Don’t be strangers.

***Semper Fidelis,***

**Joe Featherston**



The Desert Mustangs connected the Mustangs throughout the State of Arizona. A small microcosm of what National tries to do. We set about doing things that helped fellow veterans, youth programs and veteran hospitals with the small resources we had available. Small resources but great dividends to all that we were able to accomplish.

I feel we ask the wrong questions about joining a national organization. Instead of the above questions, why aren't we asking, "What can I do at a local level to help support the National purpose?" I do not expect anything from National. I expect our Chapter to support them. I expect to get out, what I put into it.

A very good example of "Why" is when we had a local member pass away. We contacted the family to see what we could do. Because the family was all over the States, it would be a while before arrangements could be made. We stayed in contact and after several months' plans had been made...across the country. We then contacted, I believe the only Mustang in the area, and without hesitating said he would help the family in their time of need. This is our purpose, to help each other, not only in the bad, tough times, but the good times too. Another one of our members is proudly heading up some of the local Marine histories and works tirelessly on helping establish memorials to the fallen. Another member was heavily involved in Young Marines for years. Others, work as Marine Corps JROTC instructors. So many more, who have done things to make their communities better places to live, help veterans in the hospital with comfort items, knitting caps for surgery patients to help keep them warm, and on and on.

If you are waiting for an answer to those questions above, you may need to rethink your position. We are in a critical situation for the survival of the Mustang Association. Many ask what is in it for me, but without the membership, there is not much they can do. It is a loop that can only be broken by the support of its membership. It can only be broken by Marine Mustangs stepping up at the local levels in Chapters or establishing new Chapters IN SUPPORT of the National organization.

I grew up in a very dysfunctional, broken family. I lived in foster homes all of my young life. But I never asked, "Why am I a part of this family?" I just was. I became a Marine. I became a Marine Mustang. Never asked what was in it for me or why I was a part of them. I just was.

*Editor's Note: Mark Blaydes is President of the Desert Mustangs of Arizona. He and his wife Cindey (a MCMA Associate Member) reside in Case Grande, Arizona.*



## **WELCOME ABOARD**

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Ens William E. Richardson IV, USCGR, Littleton, MA

# FROM A VIET NAM VET PILOT..

By Harry Reasoner

February 16, 1971



"You can't help but have the feeling that there will come a future generation of men, if there are any future generations of men, who will look at old pictures of helicopters and say, "You've got to be kidding."

Helicopters have that look that certain machines have in historical drawings. Machines or devices that came just before a major breakthrough. Record - changers just before the lightweight vinyl LP for instance.

Mark Twain once noted that he lost belief in conventional pictures of angels of his boyhood when a scientist calculated for a 150-pound man to fly like a bird, he would have to have a breast bone 15 feet wide supporting wings in proportion. Well, that's sort of the way a helicopter looks.

The thing is helicopters are different from airplanes. An airplane by its nature wants to fly, and if not interfered with too strongly by unusual events or incompetent piloting, it will fly. A helicopter does not want to fly. It is maintained in the air by a variety of forces and controls working in opposition to each other. And if there is any disturbance in this delicate balance the helicopter stops flying immediately and disastrously. There is no such thing as a gliding helicopter.

That's why being a helicopter pilot is so different from being an airplane pilot, and why in generality airplane pilots are open, clear-eyed, buoyant extroverts. And helicopter pilots are brooders, introspective anticipators of trouble. They know if something bad has not happened it is about to.

All of this, of course, is greatly complicated by being shot at. American helicopter pilots are being shot at more often and more accurately these days from Khe Sahn to Tchepone than at almost any other time in this whole War.

It's been a helicopter war all along. And the strange, ungainly, unlovable craft have reached the peak of being needed and the peak of being vulnerable at the same moment. Everyone who has flown over combat zones in VN in a helicopter knows the heart-stopping feeling you get when you have to go below 2,000 feet. Well the men going in and out of Laos rarely get a chance to fly that high. They must be very brave men indeed.

This is a War we could not have considered without helicopters. The pilots are beginning to feel like Mark Twain's man who was tarred and feathered. If it weren't for the honor of the thing, they would just as soon have missed it."

**The Association thanks the following for their generous donations:**

LTC Dennis H. Fink

Capt James Murphy—*Mustang Marine patches for new members*

## A SOMEWHAT AMUSING STORY

I arrived in Korea in early winter 1951 as a PFC and joined the Combat Service Group engineer maintenance platoon. The platoon sergeant was MSgt Herbert F. Smith. He and I had a number of experiences with the equipment; one time while I was at the controls, he twisted a boom and effectively placed most of the camp in darkness! I left Korea as a sergeant (old rank). About a year later, I was a fresh caught 21-year-old 2ndLt and assigned as the platoon commander of the engineer equipment maintenance platoon of the 8<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion at Camp Geiger, Camp LeJeune. I reported aboard, and realized my former platoon sergeant, Herbert F. Smith, was now my platoon sergeant! Such a small world!

One winter day (and it gets cold at Camp Lejeune in the wintertime!) we were basically housed in a Butler Building. One day I was out checking on the men when I looked back into the Butler Building to see all the sergeants sitting in the warm office drinking coffee. I went in and started berating them to "Get out with the men!" MSgt Smith was a cool dude! He simply said, "We don't need to, Lieutenant, you're doing it for us!" Pow! A real lesson in leadership, one I never forgot.

Thanks MSgt Smith, for the message!

Maj James Murphy, USMC (Ret)  
Los Osos, CA

## Retirees and Disabled Vets Due for Record Raise Next Year

Military retirees and disabled veterans could see their monthly checks jump by hundreds of dollars each month in 2022, the largest increase since 1983.

The annual inflation-based Cost of Living Adjustment, or COLA, soon will be determined by the government, and all the figures point to an increase of at least 6%, and maybe more, beginning in 2022.

That means that next year, military retirees will see their monthly retirement check increase, with the average monthly check going up by around \$160. Veterans receiving disability compensation from the [Department of Veterans Affairs](#) also will see their monthly [disability payments](#) increase, with the average monthly amount increasing by nearly \$100.

According to the [Defense Department](#), there are around 1.87 million military retirees, with an annual average retirement payment of \$30,265. The [VA says](#) nearly 5.1 million veterans receive disability compensation, with an annual benefit of \$18,549.

The annual COLA increase is based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is measured by the Department of Labor. That agency measures the costs of a select group of goods and services and compares those costs to the previous year. If there is an increase, retirees and many others receiving government benefits see an increase in their monthly payments for the upcoming year. If those costs go down, the government payments will remain the same in the upcoming year.

In 2021, costs for most goods and services have gone up much faster than they have in the past. The [most recent data from the Department of Labor](#) is showing a 5.4% increase from last year, and there are two more months left in the current fiscal year, which ends on Sept. 30.

So, unless there is a major turnaround of the economy, with prices dropping dramatically in the next month or so, next year's government payments should see a hefty increase.

The CPI also is used to determine federal employee retirement and social security COLA adjustments as well as other federal benefit programs, so the CPI increase will affect over 50 million Americans.

Next year's COLA is scheduled to be announced in early October. When it is, Military.com will have the latest information, including [disability pay rates](#) available to you.



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS  
3000 MARINE CORPS PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON DC 20350-3000

18 August 2021

Marines,

As each of us tries to comprehend the speed and scope of events in Afghanistan this week, some may be struggling with a simple question: "Was it all worth it?" We see videos and photos, we read stories that bring back memories for some of us, and it becomes intensely personal. We value human life and we want to believe that what Marines have done in Afghanistan made a difference. While Sergeant Major Black and I don't presume to speak for you or your family, we would like to offer our thoughts so you know where your senior leaders stand.

We both believe – without question – that your service was meaningful, powerful, and important. You answered the call to serve, proudly carrying the torch of so many generations of Marines before you. You put the good of others before yourself. You fought to defend your country, your family, your friends, and your neighbors. You fought to prevent terror from returning to our shores. You fought for the liberty of young Afghan girls, women, boys, and men who want the same individual freedoms we enjoy as Americans. You fought for the Marine to your left and the Marine to your right. You never let them down. You never, ever gave up. You lived with purpose, with intention. Whether you realize it or not, you set an example for subsequent generations of Marines – and Americans – by living our core values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment. Was it worth it? Yes. Does it still hurt? Yes.

Since 2001, Marines have served honorably and courageously to bring peace to the people of Afghanistan. You should take pride in your service – it gives meaning to the sacrifice of all Marines who served, including those whose sacrifice was ultimate.

Over the coming days and weeks, we encourage you to connect with your fellow Marines and their families – particularly those you served with overseas. This is a time to come together and give further meaning to our motto, Semper Fidelis. Let us remain faithful to our fellow Marines, faithful to our Marine families, and faithful to the memories of all who have sacrificed.

We are intensely proud to serve alongside you as your Commandant and Sergeant Major.

Semper Fidelis,

David H. Berger  
General, U.S. Marine Corps  
Commandant of the Marine Corps

Troy E. Black  
SgtMaj, U.S. Marine Corps  
Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps

## 2022 MUSTANG MUSTER

Planning is underway for our next Mustang Muster. We will join with the 8<sup>th</sup> & I Reunion Association in Arlington, Virginia, **August 4 – 7, 2022**.

The Muster/Reunion will be in the Crystal Gateway Marriott Hotel, 1700 Richmond Hwy, Arlington, VA 22202. Reservations should be made at 1-800-228-9290 and be sure to let the reservations person know you are with the 8<sup>th</sup> & I Reunion group. Rooms are \$129. + tax. A banquet will be held on Saturday, August 6<sup>th</sup>. Cost is \$85 per person.

More event details will be published when they are available along with a forthcoming link for reservations and events.

# MUSTANG MERCHANDISE



Polo shirt with left side pocket —\$45

These items are available to view and purchase with your credit card on our MCMA website in the Post Exchange area. Or, you can print the form and send it with your check/money order to:

**MCMA**

**PO Box 1190**

**Quantico, VA 22134-0190**



Challenge coin with Member ID # - \$20



Ball Cap —\$25



Notecards with envelopes, set of 10 —\$20



## WHAT TO DO WHEN A MUSTANG IS DECEASED...

Unfortunately, the day comes for all of us. As a member of the MCMA, we'd appreciate it if you would report the death of your beloved Mustang to the MCMA Business Manager via Phone (703) 349-0893 or email at [BusinessMngr@MarineCorpsMustang.org](mailto:BusinessMngr@MarineCorpsMustang.org) so that he may update the membership directory. Please let us know if we can do anything for you as well.

## MOVED RECENTLY OR CHANGED YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION...

Life keeps us all busy and our best intentions get overcome and forgotten but if you have recently moved or changed an email address or purchased a new phone, we'd appreciate it if you would take a minute and report it to the MCMA Business Manager via Phone at (703) 349-0893 or email at [BusinessMngr@MarineCorpsMustang.org](mailto:BusinessMngr@MarineCorpsMustang.org) so that he may update the membership directory. Please let us know if we can do anything for you as well.



## Mustang Honor Roll

Maj Charles W. Carroll  
 Loveland, OH  
 6 February 2021

LtCol William B. "Brooks" Corley, Jr.  
 Harrisonburg, VA  
 13 January 2021

Maj William E. Duke  
 Ipswich, MA  
 2 February 2021

Maj William M. Hemlepp, Sr.  
 York, SC  
 29 February 2020

CWO-4 David L. Horne  
 West Palm Beach, FL  
 17 August 2021

Capt James Jennings  
 Atlanta, GA  
 8 July 2021

Capt George E. Johnson  
 Scarborough, ME  
 20 December 2020

Maj William P. Keogh  
 League City, TX  
 4 July 2021

Capt John S. Lane  
 Philippine Islands  
 16 August 2021

Maj Michael P. Mastroberti  
 Beaufort, SC  
 31 July 2021

LtCol John R. Stevens  
 San Francisco, CA  
 25 May 2021

We are still missing **Printed Directories** for the following years. If you have a copy, please share it with our Business Manager so it can be scanned and placed in our archives. The original will be returned to you. Your assistance is very much appreciated.

**1998**

**2007**

**2008**

**2011**

**2013**



Daniel McGee

I enlisted in the Corps in March 1968. My career included a wide variety of assignments with emphasis on telecommunications and maintenance. After initial Comm-Elect School, I served in Vietnam as a radio operator with 12<sup>th</sup> Marines and as a member of the artillery forward observer team with 4<sup>th</sup> Marines.

After returning to the States, I served as a Marine Security Guard at American Embassies in Kabul, Afghanistan and Teipei, Republic of China. After MSG duty, I transferred to the inactive reserves to attend El Camino Junior College. Graduating in 1975 I returned to active duty. While serving with 1<sup>st</sup> MarDiv as a Battalion Comm Chief, I was selected for Warrant Officer in 1982. Assigned to the Marine Corps Communications-Electronics School as Training Officer and course developer until my selection as aide-de-camp to the CG, 7<sup>th</sup> Marine Expeditionary Brigade, MCAGCC 29 Palms, CA. Upon completion of that duty, and promotion to 1stLt, I was selected for the Degree Completion Program, graduating summa cum laude in 1988.

Promoted to Captain in 1988 and assigned to 3<sup>rd</sup> FSSG as Assistant Comm-Elect Officer until assuming command of Electronics-Maintenance Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> MaintBn, in 1989. After selection as a regular unrestricted officer, and another school, I was assigned to Co F, Marine Security Guard Battalion, Nairobi, Kenya as Executive Officer, promoted to Major in 1995.

Significant follow-on tours include: Deputy Assistant Chief of Staff, G-6, 2d FSSG; CO, Communications Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> FSSG; CO, CSSD-28, CAX 9/10; XO, H&S Bn, 2<sup>nd</sup> FSSG; Assistant Chief of Staff, G-6, 1<sup>st</sup> MAW; CO, MWCS-18; Assistant Chief of Staff, G-6, MCB Camp Smedley D. Butler, Okinawa until my retirement in April 2004.



My name is Tim Cook CWO-4 (USMC, 6004, retired, R-2699), and have been a paid member of the Mustang Association since 2014 with broken time before that. I served as your secretary for 5 years and your Vice President for one year during 2014-2019. I am interested in continuing to serve you and the association as a “Director” of the association if you will have me. I am aware of the commitment and responsibility required to serve you as a Director of the Association as well as the work needed to be accomplished over the next three years to take the Association into the future. There’s a lot of work needed to be done for our Mustang Association and I’m ready and willing if you will vote for me.

Greetings and Salutations to My Fellow Mustangs

My name is Rich Lewis and I am interested in serving you as one of the Directors.

I am happily married and we live in the Bixby Knolls area of Long Beach.

I have two Masters Degree’s, one in Management and another in Occupational Safety and Health with Environmental Management.

I am also a Distinguished Toastmaster.

I enjoy playing at golf and swim at least three days a week.

I enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1975 and graduated Honor Man of Platoon 3023 at Parris Island. As an enlisted Marine I attended MCCES in 29 Palms for Primary MOS training (initial 5963 and technician 5979) and later as Permanent Personnel in the Tactical Data Systems Maintenance Section. During these years I also had two different tours with Marine Air Control Squadron 4 1<sup>st</sup> MAW Okinawa.

While stationed at MCCES as Permanent Personnel I applied for Enlisted Commissioning Program and was selected. I graduated with the 122 OCC on 16 Dec 1982 and completed TBS with class 5-83. While at TBS the monitor informed me that I would be returning to the fleet as a 7210, Air Defense Weapons Controller with a MACS unit.

I separated as a Captain and began my civilian career as a Software Engineer in the Defense industry. I rose to project director for several programs and became interested in Occupational Safety and Health. I worked as a Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Specialist / Manager for various companies from Mercedes Benz Research and Development North America to my current employer Caledonian Alloys. Each of these jobs led me to increasing levels of responsibility and leadership resulting in my recent assumption of duties as Plant Manager.

I look forward to your vote and serving as one of YOUR MCMA Director’s.



# **BALLOT FOR 2021 ELECTION CANDIDATES**

**PLEASE VOTE FOR ONE CANDIDATE FOR EACH POSITION**

***DIRECTORS:*** (PLEASE VOTE FOR EACH CANDIDATE BELOW)

**DANIEL MCGEE** YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_

**TIMOTHY COOK** YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_

**RICHARD LEWIS** YES \_\_\_ NO \_\_\_

**PLEASE GET YOUR VOTE IN BY 30 SEPTEMBER 2021**

**MEMBER'S SIGNATURE** \_\_\_\_\_

**MEMBER#** \_\_\_\_\_ **DATE** \_\_\_\_\_

**MAIL OR EMAIL TO THE BUSINESS MANAGER**

**MCMA, P.O. BOX 190, QUANTICO, VA. 22134-0190**

**BUSINESSMNGR@MARINECORPSMUSTANG.ORG**

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## **MCMA APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP**

NEW

RENEWAL

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Circle One

USMC (Active) (Ret.); USMCR (Active) (Ret.); Marine Veteran; Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Rank: \_\_\_\_\_ MOS: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates Enlisted: \_\_\_\_\_ Dates Officer \_\_\_\_\_

Date Retired/Released from Active Duty: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Membership Dues: \$40 - 1 year (\$35 renew) / \$90 - 3 years

Send payment to: Marine Corps Mustang Assn., Inc.  
PO Box 190  
Quantico, VA 22134-0190

National Headquarters

**MARINE CORPS MUSTANG ASSOCIATION, Inc.**

Post Office Box 190

Quantico, VA 22134-0190

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U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Quantico, VA 22134  
PERMIT NO. 1000

*Address Service Requested*

**Moving? Retiring? Address Wrong?**

Please let us know your new address!

Your date of Retirement! Any required corrections!

And, don't forget to let us know your new phone number and email address. Please include all nine digits of your zip code!

**PURPOSE**

The principal purpose of the Marine Corps Mustang Association, Inc., is to advocate and provide career enhancing support for Officer Members who have enlisted Marine Corps experience. We are an organization made up of Mustang Officers with a broad spectrum of successful military and civilian experience. We pursue this mission through mentoring, networking and facilitating relationships that assist Mustangs in their careers and civilian transitions. We provide a venue of sharing lessons-learned in occupational fields and industry initiatives that support the mission of the United States Marine Corps.