



# **MESTENGO**

Volume 21 Issue 2

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Summer 2021

## **Mustang Association Welcomes New Honorary Chairman**



“ *The significant contributions of Mustangs to our Nation’s Corps of Marines is noteworthy and among the principal reasons for our status as an elite fighting force. Our Marines, and the Sailors who serve with us, have benefitted greatly from their knowledge, experience and wisdom through the years. Their leadership and professionalism at all levels has always made major contributions to the Nation’s Force in Readiness.*

*For all Mustangs, thank you. Take care of yourselves, take care of each other, God Bless and Semper Fidelis, ”*

*Al Gray, Marine*

The Marine Corps Mustang Association is pleased to announce General Alfred Gray, USMC, Retired, has accepted President Joe Featherston’s request to become our Honorary Chairman. General Gray is MCMA’s Honorary Member #1.

General Gray has served as Board Chairman and CEO for several public and private companies and has

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**MARINE CORPS MUSTANG  
ASSOCIATION, Inc.**

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**HONORARY CHAIRMAN**

**Gen Alfred M. Gray, USMC (Ret)**  
29th Commandant of the Marine Corps

**OFFICERS**

**President:** Maj Joe Featherston,  
USMCR (Ret)  
**Vice President:** Maj Warren F. Muldrow,  
USMC (Ret)  
**Secretary:** CWO-5 Ronald K. Cookson,  
USMC (Ret)  
**Treasurer:** Maj John Darracott, USMC (Ret)  
**Chaplain:** 1stLt Ernest E. Johnson,  
USMC (Ret)

**DIRECTORS**

LtCol Mark C. Blaydes, USMC (Ret)  
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Capt Edward M. "Nick" Russell Jr.,  
USMC (Ret)  
Col Robert E. Steffensen, USMC (Ret)

**BOARD MEMBERS EMERITUS**

Capt Robert E. Richter, USMC (Ret)  
(2018-2019)

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**ON THIS DAY...**

April 6, 1776— Continental Marines on the USS Alfred participated in the first naval engagement.

April 27, 1805—Lt Presley O'Bannon raised the American flag over Derna, Tripoli.

April 29, 1975—Marine helicopters evacuated 6,968 people from Vietnam during Operation Frequent Wind.

May 2, 1965—Marines participated in the intervention in the Dominican Republic.

May 15, 1862— Cpl John Mackie became the first Marine awarded the Medal of Honor.

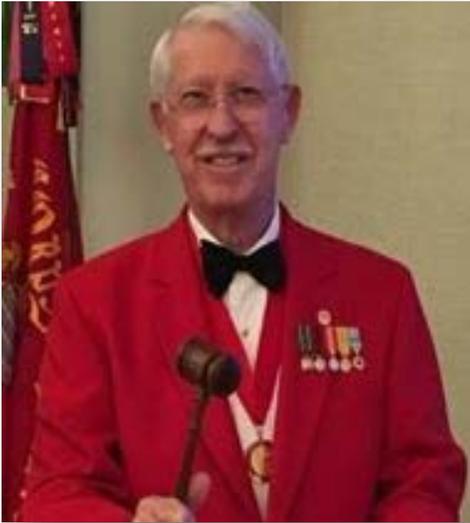
May 22, 1912—Lt Alfred A. Cunningham became the first Marine assigned to aviation duty.

June 6, 1918— Marines began offensive operations at Belleau Wood.

June 25, 1950—The Korean War began.

June 30, 1834—Congress placed the Marine Corps in the Department of the Navy.

## FROM: THE PRESIDENT



*Major Joe Featherston, USMC (Ret)*

Greetings to all our esteemed, and valued, members across the country. As I write this message the nation, and hopefully the world, begins the challenging processes of returning to a new normal in our lives. Because of the countless workarounds developed to mitigate the pandemic effects I doubt that there will be a complete return to what we knew in 2019. Marines have always been noted for being able to adapt and overcome obstacles and I trust we will again do that in our personal lives. Some of us have experienced significant personal loss and that will not change back but each day begins with just one step forward. As Admiral McRaven has said, “first, make your bed.”

A notable positive action took place recently for the association when General Al Gray, the 29th Commandant of the Marine Corps, graciously accepted our invitation to serve as our Honorary

Chairman. While it is generally a ceremonial title it is designed to allow General Gray to also serve several other organizations and commercial businesses in a leadership role without unduly placing heavy responsibilities on him. The officers and board members, however, can now count on the ‘public’ face of General Gray, his advice and counsel, as we strive to move forward into the “new” normal facing all fraternal associations. I could not be more pleased to have General Gray on board and involved as his time permits. We will surely benefit from his personality and keen sense of ‘things to do’ and you will begin to witness some changes in days to follow.

As a social goal we are planning a joint muster (reunion) in 2022 with the 8th & Eye Association in Washington during August. Regrettably, there is no way to fully plan and implement a gathering in 2021 considering the detailed logistics involved and the financial risk associated with certain guarantees. We are putting our best efforts into an exceptional program and the opportunity to actually “see” folks again after a too-long hiatus.

On a continuing basis we ask all members to recruit just one new member whenever that opportunity arises. Increasing our membership numbers especially with younger officers is absolutely essential to survival of the Marine Corps Mustang Association. Their energy and ideas will be our lifeline and the key to a great professional and personal association in the decades ahead. My personal best wishes and warm regards go out to all of you, and your families. May your Summer be a more relaxed period and please, stay in touch with us. We need to hear from you when you have something to share, ideas or questions.

***Semper Fidelis,***

**Joe Featherston**



consulted to United States and international industry and government.

General Gray's other duties have included service on the Defense Science Board; the Defense Special Operations Advisory Group; the National Security Agency Science Advisory Board; the National Reconnaissance Office Gold Team; the Defense Operations Support Office Advisory Team; and as Director of the Advanced Concept Demonstration Technology for Combat in the Littorals. Consistent with his interest in education and helping servicemen and women, he is trustee Emeritus of Norwich University, past trustee on Monmouth University, past member of the National Defense University Board of Visitors and is Chairman Emeritus of American Military University. He is Chairman Emeritus of The Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund and the America Fund, having served over ten years, to help take care of wounded veterans and their families.

In 1991, Al Gray retired after 41 years of service to the United States Marine Corps. From 1987-1991, General Gray served as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, was the 29th Commandant of the Marine Corps, and was advisor to both Presidents Reagan and George H. W. Bush. As Commandant, he instituted and published a Warfighting Philosophy for Marines based on the Maneuver Warfare Thought Process. General Gray developed and implemented a new long-range strategic planning process for the Marine Corps, established the Marine Corps University, and implemented other longstanding changes, such as ensuring that every Marine is a rifleman first and that the Marine Corps was Special Operations Capable.

General Gray enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1950 and achieved the rank of Sergeant while serving in amphibious reconnaissance with Fleet Marine Force, Pacific aboard the submarine USS Perch (ASSP-313). He was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in 1952. In the early years, he held extensive assignments overseas in the Far East and Southeast Asia in infantry, artillery, intelligence, communications and special operations. He has held every infantry command assignment from platoon commander through Division Commander and has commanded every Marine Air Ground Task Force from Marine Corps Expeditionary Unit to Marine Expedition Force.

General Gray holds a B.S. from the University of the State of New York. He also attended Lafayette College, the Marine Corps Command and Staff College and the Army War College. General Gray is the recipient of two honorary Doctor of Law degrees, one from Lafayette College and the other from Monmouth University, and was awarded a Doctor of Military Science from Norwich University. He was the first awardee of an Honorary Doctorate of Strategic Intelligence from the Defense Intelligence College (now the Joint Military Intelligence College), was awarded an Honorary Doctorate for Leadership from the Franklin University, an Honorary Doctorate for Public Service from the American Public University System, and an Honorary Doctorate of Warfare Studies from the Marine Corps University.

In 2008, General Gray was inducted into the National Security Agency Hall of Honor for rendering distinguished service to American Cryptology.

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

LtCol William A. Allanson

Col Warren H. Wiedhahn



## **Advertising in the *Mestengo***

**In our association's constant focus on funding ongoing and future operations, we are establishing an initiative for advertising in the quarterly *Mestengo* and with adding links to our web site. This would be similar to advertising commonly found in church bulletins and military magazines. Ads or notices would be offered in business card, quarter page, half-page and full pages options at established fees, listed below.**

**Contact the association Business Manager for details. Corporate sponsorship is welcome.**

Priority will be association members with business or personal interests, other Marines, other military, and approved commercial entities. Ads should be 'camera ready' upon submission.

Price per quarterly issue:

Business card size	\$50.00
Quarter-page	\$100.00
Half-page	\$200.00
Full page	\$350.00

### **WELCOME ABOARD**

Maj Richard D. Bedford, USMC (Ret), Rockledge, FL

Maj Michael D. Breslin, USMC, Dumfries, VA

2ndLt Matthew Rentfro, Dumfries, VA

Col Barron S. Taylor, USMC, Upper Marlboro, MD

# Notes from NMCC Meeting on 10 April 2021

Members of the National Marine Corps Council (NMCC) were pleased to welcome “The Three Amigos for Force Modernization” to their semi-annual meeting (virtual via Zoom) on Saturday, 10 April 2021. The three Marine brigadier generals:

- BG Benjamin Watson (CG, Marine Corps Warfighting Laboratory)
- BG Eric Austin (Director, Capabilities Development Directorate)
- BG Arthur Paragian (Commander, Marine Corps Systems Command)

provided NMCC members with a superb “concept-driven, threat informed” strategy briefing. As the NMCC Chairman, John Bridges’ letter of appreciation to the three general officers noted, “The three-prong approach expressed (during the briefing) further promotes individual dedication, knowledge, and exemplary efforts supporting the Commandant’s Planning Guidance and Force Design 2030, thus positioning the Marine Corps as a dominant force in future development and overall readiness.”

## Notes from the meeting:

- CMC will probably release a document later this year, addressing new strategies and concepts.
- China is now the ‘benchmark’ against which U.S. forces must measure their readiness.
- We need a force that is lighter and more mobile.
- An interesting thought was shared during the briefing—“If you can be **sensed**, you can be **targeted**; if you can be **targeted**, you can be **killed**.”
- The generals also collectively voiced the notion that “The Marine Corps will never fight alone” ....it will always rely upon Joint or Coalition forces.
- Regarding China, it was pointed out that there have been in the recent past, and most certainly will be in the future, numerous movements of U.S. Naval forces in the Pacific. Our bases in Guam, Okinawa, South Korea, and Tinian will see far more activity than they have in past years in order to deal with China’s expansion in the region.
- This statement and question was raised—“The Army is talking about some of the same things we are. What continues to make us different from the Army, especially from the point of view of the Secretary of Defense?” ....the response focused squarely on Naval Integration....it is foreign to the Army and makes coordination extremely difficult to accomplish.
- Both military services are giving up combat support elements that have been a part of them for decades—long-range artillery (Army) and armor (Marine Corps).
- Another concept to be pondered—when building one kind of force to counter a specific threat (i.e., China), how does the Corps ‘pivot’ to address a different kind of enemy or threat?
- The tragic event off San Clemente Island involving an LVTP was then discussed, in connection with a host of Chain of Command-related problems that have recently surfaced.
- Under New Business, the Council was advised of the new NMCC Website—  
<http://www.NationalMarineCorpsCouncil.org>
- Additionally, the Council was made aware that a change or modification to the NMCC’s By-Laws is probably necessary. It deals with the terminology used to describe our member organizations and will be dealt with by the Council’s Executive Committee.

# MUSTANG MERCHANDISE

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**



Polo Shirt with left side pocket—\$45



Challenge Coin with Member ID # - \$20



Ball Cap—\$25



Notecards and envelopes \$20 for 10

## CALLING ALL MUSTANGS



Do you have an amusing story or anecdote about a Mustang you served with? Maybe a Sea Story or two? Perhaps something after the statutes of limitations has run out and you no longer have to worry about locking it up in front of the XO? Well, now's your chance for fame & glory, or at least a byline recognition. Send your missive to the Mestengo editor so all of our members can enjoy it too. You can send it via email to:

[BusinessMngr@marinecorpsmustang.org](mailto:BusinessMngr@marinecorpsmustang.org) or

MCMA Mestengo

PO Box 190

Quantico, VA 22134-0190



### 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

CWO-4 Wenceslao U. Aquino  
 Anaheim, CA  
 19 July 2019

Capt Joseph V. Fisher, Jr.  
 Semmes, AL  
 22 January 2021

Capt Phillip L. Foss  
 29 Palms, CA  
 31 August 2020

Evelyn K. Knowles  
 Lynnwood, MA  
 9 September 2018

Col John O. Marsh  
 Cynthiana, KY  
 12 April 2019

1stLt Federico T. Verceles  
 Sarasota, FL  
 29 July 2020

## Mustang Association Past Presidents

Capt Herman H. Walbert, USMC (Ret)  
 (1985-1989)  
 LtCol Paul L. Hirt, USMC (Ret)  
 (1989-1992)  
 LtCol Thomas E. Graney, USMC (Ret)  
 (1992-1994)  
 Maj G. Radford, USMC (Ret)  
 (1994-1996)  
 Capt Robert E. Richter, USMC (Ret)  
 (1996-1999)

Maj Jerry V. Lasher, USMC (Ret)  
 (1999-2002)  
 Maj Peter E. Bocker, USMC (Ret)  
 (2002-2005)  
 LtCol Phillip Ray, USMC (Ret)  
 (2005-2007)  
 Capt Joseph B. Davis, USMC (Ret)  
 (2008-2009)

Capt Sidney L. Spurgeon, USMC (Ret)  
 (2009-2010)  
 Maj George W. Fritch, USMC (Ret)  
 (2010-2014)  
 1stLt Ernest E. Johnson, USMC (Ret)  
 (2014-2018)  
 CWO-4 Alex J. Childress, USMC (Ret)

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**



## SEMPER FI FUND

Army - Marine Corps - Navy - Air Force - Coast Guard

The Semper Fi Fund is excited to announce the:

### LCpl Parsons Welcome Home Fund for Vietnam Veterans

The Semper Fi Fund expanded our mission to care for veterans from all US military service branches who are catastrophically wounded, ill, or injured from combat operations in Vietnam.

#### **\*Eligibility criteria**

- Blind/legally blind
- ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease)
- Amputation (loss of any limb or extremities)
- PTSD (combat related) — 70% or greater VA rating
- Paralyzed (paraplegia, quadriplegia, hemiplegia)
- Severe Traumatic Brain Injury (cannot function independently)
- Severe illness linked to Agent Orange exposure (recognized by the VA)

#### **Documents required**

- Copy of DD214
- Photo ID (front/back)
- LCpl Parsons Welcome Home Fund Application
- VA rating decision letter and/or signed note from medical provider stating diagnosis

#### **Assistance may be provided in the following areas**

- Housing grant (adaptive housing, home modification/repair, rent, mortgage, utilities)
- Transportation grant (adaptive transportation, vehicle modification/repair)
- Medical Care grant (not covered by insurance, Medicare, or the VA)
- Funeral/Cremation Expense

*\*must have one or more of the conditions*



For more information, please call  
760-725-3680 or contact us at  
[Vwestcoastcw@semperfifund.org](mailto:Vwestcoastcw@semperfifund.org)



#### **Election for President and Directors will be coming in Fall 2021!**

There's still time to submit your photo and bio or nominate a fellow Mustang member.

Send all submissions to the Secretary, Ron Cookson, at  
[Secretary@MarineCorpsMustang.org](mailto:Secretary@MarineCorpsMustang.org)



**Are you on Facebook?** Many people are and we need a volunteer to monitor and look after MCMA's Facebook account. Forwarding questions to the Secretary, posting Mustang news and events, etc. Our former Vice President, Tim Cook, has offered to answer any questions you may have.

If you're interested in helping out, please call Tim at 817-800-3575 and also let Business Manager Jim Casey know ([BusinessMngr@MarineCorpsMustang.org](mailto:BusinessMngr@MarineCorpsMustang.org))



The Third Marine Division Association will have their next reunion in Fort Worth, Texas, 14 – 19 September 2021. Reunion activities and sign up information can be found at [www.caltrap.org](http://www.caltrap.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

NON-PROFIT  
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.