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## VIETNAM LEGACIES

Vietnam: it's almost a mythic era now. Not "The Good War" Brokaw wrote about, but the war that caused great schisms within our nation. Each war, whether popular or unpopular, however, is fought by the young warriors whose turn it is to wage it. And these warriors always have stories to tell.

In PMLA we have a number of veterans. On Saturday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, we'll hear tales from four of our Vietnam combat veterans, four guys whom you actually know quite well: **Norm Peables, Joe Riley, and Ed Peters** were Army types who flew as pilots or crewman in helicopters. Our fourth speaker, a carrier pilot in Vietnam, is our own PMLAA president, **Marle Hewett**. Our speakers will tell stories on how their flying experiences in Vietnam relate to the way we fly today.

Of course, all of you will have the chance to ask questions, too. No books have been written by these four; they're simply sharing their stories about their experiences.



**Norm** flew Hueys in the 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the 1<sup>st</sup> Air Cavalry Division in 1969.



**Ed** was a crew chief/door gunner with the 92<sup>nd</sup> and 189th Assault Helicopter Companies, 1<sup>st</sup> Aviation Brigade



**Joe**, a W2 Warrent Officer pilot flew CH-47 Chinooks



**Marle**, the pilot in the picture to the right, flew A-7s off the USS America in '67-68



## *The President's Corner*

*Marle Hewett*

For my part, I remember my Vietnam experience as mixed; first, it represented the culmination of what I had been trained to do for so long; it was my duty. But it was not at all what I expected.

I remember going into it with a lot of preconceived notions about how a war ought to be fought. I envisioned applying tactics developed and learned in years of training and command decisions being made by commanders "in the field or at sea". It didn't work that way at all. Tactical decisions were made at very high levels, much higher than you would expect. In many cases, specific tactics were also dictated at the same level: approach paths, altitudes, timing, escape routes, coordination. It was strange and frustrating. Our Task Force Commander (a three star) seemed to have little room to maneuver.

Each carrier in our task group had a daily "tonnage off the bow" figure to meet (tonnage meaning total weight of ordnance dropped per carrier per day). USS America's quota was 240 tons per day. The smaller "27 Charlie" carriers were assigned a smaller quota. If you were the Air Wing Commander, not making your quota was grounds for being relieved. No one asked where you dropped the bombs – that was handled by another department.

I remember our carrier being rearmed at sea every day from an ammunition ship: we would take on over 800 Mark 82 bombs (500 pounders) every day. That's one carrier's worth for one day, every day of the war (two carriers on station all the time). Add that up – and that's just the Navy. Between the Air Force and Navy we dropped much more bomb tonnage in Vietnam than we did in Europe in WWII. I have a distinct memory of my very first combat mission over the North. My wingman and I toured the southern portion of North Vietnam from the 16<sup>th</sup> parallel (South of Hanoi) to the border. Everywhere it looked like the surface of the moon.

We lived with "Rules of Engagement" that were severe. We couldn't hit missile sites under construction until they were operational and shooting missiles at us. The most frustrating part was not being able to sink the supply ships heading into Haiphong harbor. We couldn't hit the supplies after they were off-loaded either. We had to wait until they were headed South by road, rail or waterway. Then, we could hit them. It cost us big time.

It was a strange war and it left its mark on me. What bothered me was the way we conducted the war. We were always winning: just another six months we were told. Victory was always just six months away. Funny thing, it didn't turn out that way.

## *BLOCK PARTY*



The Poker Run Block Party on August 4<sup>th</sup> lived up to its billing. Music, good weather, the smell of hamburgers cooking, the sounds of happy shrieks as winners of prizes were heard, the black and red motif of playing cards and chips all contributed to the festive atmosphere.

Marie and Randy Barber and the hangar hosts along the back taxiway did a terrific job of entertaining us and making the evening a memorable one. People were able to stroll along from hangar to hangar, from appetizer to appetizer and then sit down for an array of burgers, side dishes, and desserts. Yum!

And to top it all, Gary Steinhauer was a fascinating and riveting speaker who introduced The Pacific Aviation Museum to newcomers and reminded others of us what a treasure we had available if we had forgotten it. He had an insider's perspective on the Attack on Pearl Harbor that was richly informative even to those of us who thought we knew all about it.

So...Kudos to our event planners, our hangar hosts, our great group who make sure we have plenty to eat, our margarita machine tenders, our bartenders, to those who set up and who take down after every meeting, to our media experts, our neighborhood sponsors who made prizes available, and to all of you who always bring food and a joyful spirit to each gathering. Indeed, we could not do this month after month without your participation and support. Thanks!

## *Call for Volunteers*

Our always thrilling Aviation Day is coming up on October 6<sup>th</sup>. We'll be in good hands with our super efficient V.P. Eric Henderson in charge. Jim Meide and Paul Purifoy will of course be the incomparable voices orchestrating the stream of events and keeping us aware of what is about to occur. Please let these guys know if you want to help in any way.

Judy Hewett and Kay Meermans will be running the Hot Dog/Burger Stand. We are hoping we can entice some of you to put in one or two-hour stints. Please call Judy at 962-070 1 or Kay at 962-0611 if you can help. We'd be sooo grateful! :)

## *New Members*

We're delighted to share the names of several new members. Please welcome them warmly

***Yolanda & David Aiello***

***Jodi & Glen Awai, Groveland***

***Matt Frazier***

***Barbara & Mark Fridell, San Ramon***

***Alan Haigh & Susan Bramson, Coulterville***

***Martha & Robert Pearson, Walnut Grove***

***David Pullen, Groveland***

***Trish & Dwight Reimer, Shafter***

***Sharon & Michael Talmadge, San Marcos***

## Safety Reminders

**All cars and trucks must only cross the runway at the far west end. No car or truck crossing is permitted at the mid-field crossing.**

**Pedestrians, bicycles, open vehicles (golf carts, motorcycles, etc.) are permitted to cross mid field but only after STOPPING behind the hold line and looking twice both directions, the first time for aircraft on the ground and the second time for aircraft in the air.**

## *From The Airports Manager by Jim Thomas*

### Mowing Weeds at the Airport

I'm sure everyone that uses the airport has noticed that the grass is getting pretty tall around the Pine Mountain Lake Airport. The Airports has mowed the grass but there are some areas that cannot be mowed with our mower because of difficult terrain or the presence of rocks. This year, we had some late rains which delayed our schedule to mow. Then, our tractor with mower broke and had to be repaired, and then the Airport's dump truck which is used to haul the tractor to Pine Mountain Lake broke.

In May we had the Baseline crew do some weed eating around the airport but mostly on the airport owned lots on the east and west ends of the airport. Unfortunately for us, the Baseline crew has become very popular and scheduling them is very difficult. We are still trying to schedule the Baseline Crew to come back and trim the weeds in those areas still requiring work, but now they are primarily out fighting fires making them even more difficult to schedule.

Another option for weed control at the airport is to utilize Probation and/or Work Release people. But, these workers generally cannot be scheduled due to their unpredictable availability. We have put in requests for Probation and Work Release workers but they usually show up at Columbia Airport unannounced and cannot put in a full day of work making it difficult to use them at the PML Airport.

The long term solution to the weed and grass problem is to have a dedicated tractor/mower at Pine Mountain Lake Airport so the grass can be mowed in the spring time while it is still green.

Having the proper piece of equipment kept at the Pine Mountain Lake Airport will eliminate all difficulties associated with transporting the Columbia Airport tractor/mower back and forth between the two airports. Unfortunately, the current budget situation will not allow us to purchase a tractor and we don't have a secure location to store a tractor at the PML Airport at this time. So, for the foreseeable future we will have to continue managing the weeds at the airport using the current method.



## 2012 Meeting Calendar

<b>Date</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Location</b>
Sept 8	Norm Peebles, Joe Riley, Ed Peters, Marle Hewett: <i>Vietnam Legacies</i>	Pot Luck at Norm & Patty Peebles' Hangar 6:00 PM
Oct 6	AIRPORT DAY	Dinner and dancing at Toni and Silvano's Hangar 6:00 PM

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