



**HMM-163  
USMC  
COMBAT HELICOPTER ASSOCIATION  
REUNION 2010  
RENO, NEVADA  
JULY 7 – 11, 2010**

**SQUADRON BULLETIN 1  
February 2010**

**My Fellow Marines,**

**You should have already received your packet for the next United States Marine Corps Combat Helicopter Association Reunion being held in Reno, Nevada at the *Grand Sierra Resort* from July 7<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup>, 2010. If you have not received your packet, I suggest contacting POPASMOKE and requesting that you be sent one. The registration packets were to be mailed to all members current as of November 10, 2009.**

**For those of you that have not attended a recent reunion, this bulletin hopefully will bring you up to date on what transpires and provide you with encouragement to attend. The choice of Reno by the board of directors of the association was not easily made. When you have an association the size of Popasmoke spread out from one coast to the other and the Canadian border to Mexico there is no choice that will please everyone. The Association tries for some variety by moving between coasts every two years. This time the decision was made to utilize Reno.**

**Many of you will remember, we were in Reno in 2004 for our reunion. The directors chose to return to this city for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is the success of the 2004 reunion. What you may not realize is that the Grand Sierra Resort was at that time the Reno Hilton where we had our 2004 event. It has new ownership and has received some renovations and a new name.**

**GENERAL INFORMATION (good for all ranks)**

**Many locations were discussed including Branson, New Orleans, and Chicago to mention a few. The board of directors fully understands that there are many members that would like to see a reunion held somewhere in the middle of the country. Each site was eliminated for a variety of important reasons such as cost, centralized accommodations for all**

members, ease of travel to and from, and willingness to work with us on issues such as hospitality hootches and other group activities.

In the 2008 Washington, DC Reunion, the overall operation and coordination of the reunion and the field trip events was handled by a contracted company that specializes in military organization reunions and conventions, Armed Forces Reunions Inc. We are very fortunate to have them running the show again for this reunion. Those of you that attended the Washington reunion, know that AFR, with Molly Dey in charge, made the event run like clockwork with any “snafu’s” taken care of with efficiency and professionalism. We can anticipate another well run affair with this same contractor handling the planning and day to day operations. Additionally, AFT is familiar with this resort having run the Marine Corps Aviation Association annual convention there this past October.

Our squadron will be using the same crew of volunteers that have handled the squadron reunion activities for the last four reunions. Each of the past coordinators has volunteered to perform the same functions for this reunion with the addition of one other squadron member who has agreed to be our on site representative. We are fortunate that two of your squadron coordinators reside in Northern California. The close proximity of Reno to their homes affords us the opportunity to do our upfront coordination on location without the requirement of traveling long distances by air. Setting up our squadron dinner/luncheon as well as coordinating any transportation issues will be Ray Mazur with assistance from Bill Halvorsen and Bernie Gordon. Ray is new to our team but is a competent and willing volunteer that knows the area well. He will be a great asset that we are lucky to have on board. There is room for one more volunteers should any of you like to assist with coordination at this reunion or future reunions.

The following is the current list of all coordination personnel for HMM-163 at the 2010 reunion (contact information is on a separate enclosure to this bulletin):

Carl Bergman – Head Coordinator – CO  
Bernie Gordon – Admin/Finance Coordinator – XO/S1  
Ray Mazur – On Site Coordinator – S3  
Rick Rivers – Coordinator At Large – *Special Ops*  
Bill Halvorsen – Web Master/ T-Shirt Coordinator –S4  
Joe D’Arcangelo – Squadron Historian – S2  
“A. B.” Austin Bates - Shu-Fly Coordinator

I have some regrettable news I must share with all of you. I will not be attending this reunion due to some health issues. I do plan on attending future reunions. I will still be handling the administrative portions of the preparations...sending out bulletins, collecting registrations and payments,

and coordinating T-Shirt orders with Bill Halvorsen..... you just won't see me in Reno. I am truly sorry that this had to occur at this time but my thoughts will be totally with you, and do not be surprised if the phone rings in the Hospitality Hootch and I am on the other end.

Carl Bergman, our head coordinator, will ensure that all responsibilities are handled by other volunteers from our existing team and other members willing to pitch in and help. I know the 163 guys and we will have more willing volunteers than he can ever utilize. That is part of the "Can Do" spirit of this squadron.

Now for those of you that have never attended an Association reunion. You have missed some very special times. In the last decade, our squadron has had some of the largest turnouts of members for the reunions. Each year our member participation has been one of the top two squadrons from Popasmoke. We will hopefully continue that tradition with this reunion.

### **SHUFLY MARINES**

HMM-163 is unique among the squadrons as we are honored to have a special unit within the greater squadron structure. This sub-unit is affectionately referred to as the "Shu-Fly Marines". Its name is derived from the name of the Marine operation they participated in during the early years of the Vietnam War. These were the first Marine Helicopter units assigned to Vietnam in the early Sixties. In recent reunions, we have designated a specific coordinator from this group to handle Shu-Fly Marine activities should they desire to have something special on their own. I am please to announce that Austin Bates has agreed to again perform this function for the Shu-Fly Marines and will be the primary contact for any separate Shu-Fly functions. His contact information is included on the enclosed coordinator contact list. Should the decision be made to participate with the overall squadron at the HMM-163 Squadron Dinner on July 9<sup>th</sup>, Shu-Fly Marines will be welcomed with open arms and deep respect.

### **REGISTRATION AT THE EVENT**

The format for these reunions remains basically the same. It is a three day event starting with regular registration on Thursday and concluding with the final banquet on Saturday night. The Association has an *Early Bird Registration* on Wednesday for members arriving a day or two before the actual formal first day. The POPASMOKE Staff and most Squadron Coordinators arrive a day or two early to take care of setting up the Hospitality Hootch and to conduct any final arrangements that may be necessary for the Squadron Dinner or other events. There will be common registration tables alphabetically arranged for check in. These will be

manned daily by Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. employees. When registering will pick up all your previously purchased meal tickets and tour vouchers. You will not need a ticket for the squadron dinner on Friday night. We maintain a list of all members participating. It is advisable to go directly from registration to the area for picking up you "Goodie Bag".

### **VENDOR AREA DURING REGISTRATION**

During most of the reunion and particularly during registration, there is a vendor area with numerous participating suppliers selling every kind of Marine Helicopter Aviation memorabilia you can imagine. There are also informational booths manned by various veteran organizations. These booths provide free literature to update you on changes to veteran benefits and perks available to vets as well as information on joining if you desire.

The many vendor displays at the reunion make it the ideal location to find that missing badge or patch you always wanted, helicopter art work by professional artists, shirts, hats, books, model helicopters, etc., are all available. You will never find a larger selection of items in one location.

### **REUNION FREEBIES**

As mentioned above under Registration, the Association traditionally provides a "goodie" bag to all registered participants. This bag typically contains various souvenirs of the reunion for the members of POPASMOKE. In the past, the "freebies" included items such as an overnight bag with Association Logo Patch, Commemorative Coffee/Beer Mugs, T-Shirts of the event, night shirts for the ladies, and other souvenir items bearing the Popasmoke logo, the USMC emblem, and particular reference to reunion 2010 in Reno.

### **SQUADRON T-SHIRTS**

HMM-163 will again be selling our own squadron commemorative t-shirt. These shirts are great to have as a souvenir and remembrance of the event. They also act as an easy way to identify members of HMM-163 to other participants at the reunion. An order can be placed with the squadron registration/payment form included with this mailing. As the supplier requires a down payment at the start and payment with the delivery, we ask that payment for shirts be made at the time of ordering. Bill Halvorsen, our web master, and his son will be coordinating this activity as he has done in the past. I must also mention and thank Penny Halvorsen, his wife. She is always providing assistance in one way or another (I think she's a wannabee Marine). This Marine family always steps forward when there is a job needing doing and demonstrates the heart of Espirit de Corps. They consistently come up with a unique t-shirt design to commemorate the reunion. You will all want to have at least one from this reunion as a

keepsake item and many members order shirts for their family members as well as themselves.

Designing, procuring, and distributing the squadron t-shirts is a very time consuming activity during the reunion preparations. We all owe Bill and his family a debt of gratitude for their extraordinary efforts they continually make on behalf of the squadron.

If you can not make it to the reunion, you may still return the registration form and indicate in the appropriate box that you wish to order shirts. If you are not attending but choose to order, we will happily ship your shirt(s) to you at the address you put on the form. These shirts will be sent out around the time of the reunion.

### **HOSPITALITY SUITE**

All Popasmoke Squadrons maintain and operate a Hospitality Suite (“Hootch”) during the reunion. This typically is in a rented suite in the main hotel. The HMM-163 Hootch stocks various alcoholic beverages and sodas. These items are sold at a nominal charge of \$1.00 per drink. This service is run on an honor system. Our members can save a great deal of money on their refreshments compared to room service or hotel bar prices while enjoying the companionship of their squadron comrades in a relaxed atmosphere. Unfortunately we do not provide barmaids. The hours of operation are based upon the reunion events schedule and will be posted in the *Hootch*. The Hootch can be made available at any time during the reunion if any squadron member needs it. We keep several of the room keys available for members to use for access at any time. If you want access and it is locked you need only contact one of the coordinators staying in the hotel. They will be happy to give you the key or open it for you.

The “Hootch” is the ideal place to relax and visit with friends, and is the best location for obtaining the latest reunion squadron information. Your coordinators try to keep the information updated as soon as they hear it. The Hootch is your central location for all squadron business. It is also a very convenient meeting place for joining up with other squadron members and friends staying at other locations.

### **VOLUNTARY DUTY**

We are please to advise you that squadron volunteers we have needed in the past are no longer required to perform duties throughout the event. Should volunteers be needed to run a resupply mission for the hootch or some other function, they will be solicited from any squadron members available at the time. A little of the 7 “P”s (proper prior planning prevents

miss poor performance) can prevent an “ammo shortage” requiring an Emergency Night Resupply. *Translation: Plan Ahead For Our Booze Requirements when running low.*

## **SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES**

### **Thursday**

The first scheduled reunion events occur on Thursday. Your packet from Popasmoke details all the events and tours that have been prearranged by Armed Forces Reunion, Inc. This reunion has optional tours of historic Carson City (state capital) and Virginia City on Thursday. There is also a Lake Tahoe Lunch Cruise on Thursday as well as on Friday. These optional items are not included in the basic registration fee, but are reasonably priced and quite worth the expense. Transportation and all expenses are included in the cost and are a convenient way to see some of the numerous geographical and historical sites around this Northern Nevada area.

If you plan on participating in one of the Thursday events, I encourage you to arrive at the resort on Wednesday so that you can register at the “early bird” registration that day and not have to be rushed because of a departing tour you are taking Thursday morning.

The biggest event on Thursday is the “Welcome Aboard Buffet Dinner” and *Opening Ceremony* held that evening. This is always a very large affair in their main banquet room. There are numerous bars set up for “*pay as you go*” beverage service and a buffet meal that has always been excellent. The opening events invoke a lot of Marine Corps pride and involve a full compliment of military pomp and ceremony. Typically with Marine Aviation personnel, you can never fully predict what will happen during these ceremonies but there are usually some entertaining surprises you will not want to miss. There is much celebrating and renewal of old friendships, and of course, many members will be wandering around trying to locate that special individual that shared an important part of their life in combat. The camaraderie at this event is unbelievable. The smiles you will see and experience when old friends meet after long times apart is beyond description. You may also observe the occasional teary eyed greeting. Yes, Marines do cry occasionally. The dress, as it is for all events, is casual,

### **Friday**

Friday, during the day, events are planned by the Association and sometimes individual members and squadrons set up something of their own. The Friday events for this reunion included the Golf Tournament, a Lake Tahoe Lunch Cruise, and a city tour of Reno. More information will be available about these events and others as we get closer to the reunion.

**We will of course try to keep you posted in a later Squadron Bulletin if there is anything we hear that you would be interested in knowing.**

**Friday evening is left available by the association for Squadron Dinners (mini-reunions). These have been one of the major highlights of past reunions. The Squadron Dinners are handled by the individual volunteer coordinators from each squadron. While there is no formal competition for the best Friday dinner/mini reunion, unofficially people are always comparing the various squadron dinners the next day. I am proud to say that HMM-163 has had some of the very best squadron dinners during recent reunions. These events have been well attended and everyone seems to have gotten their money's worth. Some of our squadron's recent reunion dinners have been quite special. We always try to keep the cost down to as reasonable a rate as possible to encourage big participation. After discussion with the coordinators, we have chosen to use the National Automobile Museum for our banquet. We used this facility in 2004 and it was well liked by all. We will have full access to the museum and the historic vehicles in their collection. Dinner will be catered by the Siena Hotel and brought over to the museum from the hotel located across the street.**

## **SATURDAY**

**Saturday morning and/or afternoon normally has some type of Association activity. While no day time activities for Saturday are presented in the packet we recently received, it is quite possible that some Association activities may be forth coming at a later date. These will be announced by the Association and detailed in a future Squadron Bulletin. This Saturday time period may also provide you an opportunity to explore the Reno/Lake Tahoe area or the Virginia City historical area on your own. Carson City with the "Old US Mint" is also only an hour or less away. Information on what there is to see and do will be available at the Hospitality Hooch and in the hotel lobby.**

**Saturday night is the final event of the reunion and is the one thing everyone should attend. The closing banquet and show is the grand finale of the three days. The food is always excellent as is the entertainment. At our previous reunion In Reno (2004), the Saturday evening banquet had 200 tables of 10 persons each (do the math). This was the event where the name of the Association was formally changed to the USMC Combat Helicopter Association and membership was opened up to all Marine personnel directly associated with Marine Corps helicopter combat duty regardless of time period. Lifetime memberships were awarded to the Persian Gulf veteran crews of the two helicopters brought to Reno for display at the reunion. These crewmen were the first Marine non-Vietnam**

combat veterans to be given lifetime memberships.

## **CONCLUSION**

On behalf of the HMM-163 reunion coordinators, we sincerely hope you will plan to attend next summers reunion. Your Association registration packages should have arrived by now. All dues current members as of November 10, 2009 will be receiving the reunion packet with registration materials and information. If you have not received your packet, I strongly suggest you contact the association and have them send you another packet so that you will not miss out on this event. Once you have received your packet, I recommend you make your room reservation as early as possible. The main events are scheduled for the Grand Sierra Resort Hotel. This hotel is very large but we filled it in 2004 and over 100 association members were placed in other hotels in close proximity when the hotel ran out of rooms. Staying at the main hotel facilitates all your activities at the reunion, so book early.

HMM-163 will be sending out at least one more bulletins prior to the reunion. The next bulletin will include more details on the squadron activities and instructions for registration on arrival. Signing up and paying for the Squadron Dinner, and squadron t-shirt orders will be handled on the enclosed squadron registration form in this bulletin. It is important that you understand you must also register with Popasmoke to attend the association reunion functions and register with the squadron if you choose to participate in the Squadron Dinner and Hospitality Hootch. That POPASMOKE registration form is in your packet from the association along with a form and instructions for securing your room reservation.

On our Squadron Registration form we are also soliciting financial support for the administrative expenses. These include the squadron bulletin processing and mailings, Hospitality Hooch rental and set-up, copying expenses for various information handouts, and a variety of miscellaneous expenses too numerous to list. We ask that all members contribute the "not attending administrative fee" if you can not attend. It pays for the bulletins and other needs of the squadron.

We also ask that you please ensure that the squadron and the Association have your most current address, telephone number, e-mail address, and cell phone number if applicable. There are spaces provided on the forms for each registration. Should you need to contact any of the squadron coordination team, our contact information is included as an attachment to this bulletin.

A Final Bulletin will be sent to those members that have registered with the Association and/or the Squadron. It will provide the latest information available and any last minute guidance we may be able to provide to ease

**your trip to Reno.**

**On behalf of myself, my fellow coordinators and squadron comrades, I sincerely hope you will give every consideration to attending this event. It is an unfortunate truth that at every reunion there are less and less of us to get together to commemorate this special time in our lives and the people that shared in it with us.**

**Semper Fi,**

**Bernie Gordon  
Administrative/Financial Coordinator  
HMM-163 USMC CHA**

**Enclosed:**

**Coordinator Contact Information  
Squadron Registration & Order Form**

**HMM-163 USMC/CHA REUNION 2010  
MEMBER RESPONSE (RETURN NLT APRIL 30, 2010)**

- I will be participating with HMM-163 at the Squadron Hospitality Suite. I am enclosing \$30.00 to help defray the Squadron reunion administrative costs.
- I will be attending but not be participating at our HMM-163 Squadron Hospitality Suite. I am enclosing a \$15 donation towards our Squadron reunion administrative costs.
- I will be participating in the Squadron Dinner on Friday evening, July 9th. I am enclosing \$50.00 per person for myself and \_\_\_\_\_ guests.
- I will not be attending the reunion but would like to donate \$10 to the admin. expenses.

- I will be ordering the "HMM-163 Reunion 2010" t-shirt for \$15.00 each. Please list the quantities per size and total cost per size:

***ALL "T-SHIRTS" MUST BE PREPAID  
AND WILL BE ISSUED AT CHECK-IN  
OR MAILED AS APPROPRIATE!***

**MAKE ALL PAYMENTS TO:**  
**BERNIE GORDON**  
 5639 Camarrio Court  
 Etiwanda, CA 91739-2326  
 (\*Write "REUNION 2010" in the memo)

QTY.		COST
<input type="checkbox"/>	Medium	.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	Large	.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	X-Large	.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	XX-Large	.00
<input type="checkbox"/>	XXX-Large	.00
<b>Total T-Shirt Order</b>		.00
<b>Admin. Contribution</b>		.00
<b>Squad. Dinner Payment</b>		.00
<b>Donations (Not required)</b>		.00
<b>TOTAL ENCLOSED</b>		.00

- I will be available for voluntary duty should the need arise.

- I will not be available for voluntary duty.

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

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

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Use the back of the form for any comment you wish to present)*