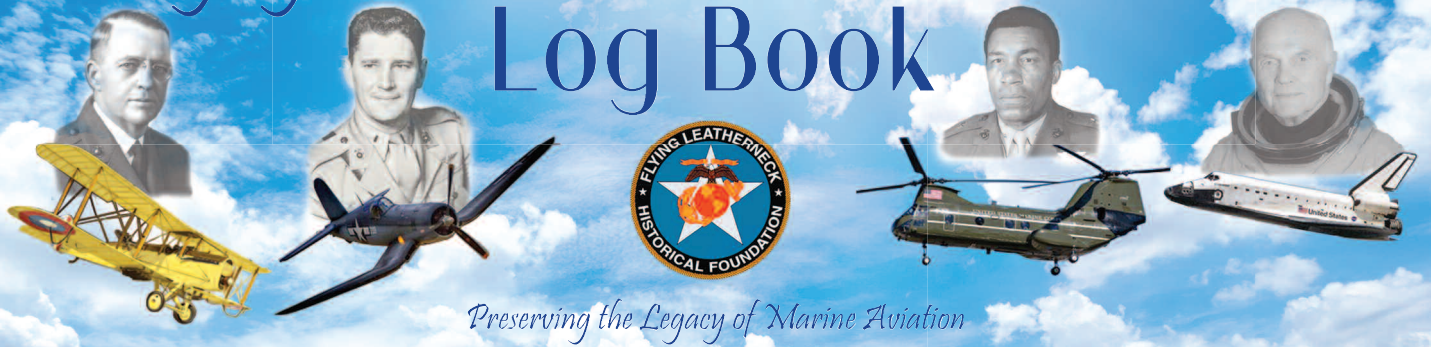


Flying Leatherneck Historical Foundation Log Book



Newsletter of the Flying Leatherneck Historical Foundation

SPRING 2023

Do Museums Really Make A Difference? *This Is My Story*

By Andrew Neel

In August 2003, my father and I visited the Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum at MCAS Miramar for the first time. Although I didn't know it at the time, this would be a monumental day in my life. We were greeted by LtCol Richard "Dick" Miller. The Colonel gave us a personal tour around the grounds and provided us with facts and stories about each era of Marine Corps aviation and the aircraft involved. By the end of the day, I had made it quite clear to the Colonel that I have a love for military aviation; it's history, and specifically the aircraft. I also explained my aspirations of becoming a Naval Officer involved in aviation, and how I was about to start high school in the coming weeks. Seizing the moment, Colonel Miller saw his opportunity and recruited me to preform my high school volunteer service requirement at the museum. I gladly accepted his offer and was eager to start. Within a few months, I was part of the weekend crew. However, volunteering only on Saturdays did not satisfy me as I was eager to do more and began to show up Sundays as well. Before I knew it, I had accumulated more than 2000+ hours of docent time before graduating high



Firefighter Andrew Neel,
City of Yuma, AZ

school. To say the Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum holds a special place in my heart would be an understatement. The people I have met and worked alongside, the stories and lessons learned, and time spent around the aircraft and physical displays have inspired my life's calling. My association with the Museum has kept me on my path of pursuing a career as a Naval Officer. My application to Officer Candidate School is currently being processed and evaluated.

Since I was a young boy, military aviation has been the biggest influence on my life.

I grew up just 10 minutes from the former NAS Miramar (the home of Top Gun) and now MCAS Miramar. Seeing aircraft flying daily and hearing them while in school filled my mind. Of course, the annual airshow, featuring the *Blue Angels*, was what I looked forward to more than any other time of year.

Both of my grandfathers were military men, serving in the US Navy and the US Marine Corps respectively. My Naval grandfather served aboard aircraft carriers as a Corpsman. His home is decorated with memorabilia

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Chairman's Message

Welcome to the Spring 2023 edition of the Log Book!

In my previous comments I stated that we have a lot of work ahead of us. That has proved to be true on many fronts and all our hard work has moved us in positive directions in many areas. We are in detailed negotiations with the City of Irvine for an agreement that will provide for funding, and storage of Museum assets from MCAS Miramar to Irvine for temporary storage in Hangar 297 on the *Great Park* grounds. If all goes well, final City approval will occur sometime in April, and we can begin moving the museum assets sometime in the early fall.

We have initiated talks with several Aircraft Restoration Companies that can help us restore our current aircraft to pristine Museum viewing condition while we wait for clearance to begin building a temporary building that will house the collection until the Great Park is fully developed and funded. In addition, we are looking to hire a Restoration and Movement Manager that can supervise the movement of the assets and the firm we finally do hire to restore the aircraft. At best, we can expect to begin the building construction in 18-24 months once all the agreements and licenses are in place. That will give us time to get several aircraft restored and other Museum displays built and organized.

Two of our Board members recently resigned their positions as Directors to pursue other business activities. They are Kim Day and Jim Ritchie. We thank them for joining us at a time when their expertise was both necessary and appreciated. We thank them for their service and wish them all the best for success in their new pursuits.

I also want to thank Hamza Suria for volunteering to head our Finance Committee. His considerable expertise, especially in his many CEO roles, will be invaluable as we develop a budget and set goals for the financial sustainability and growth of the Foundation. I also want to thank Colonel Bart Connelly for his considerable efforts to date in developing our rules and doctrine for governing the Board of Directors. This is a tremendous work in progress which, when completed, will help us all understand our roles and responsibilities within the organization.

Finally, more accolades are due to BGen Mike Aguilar, Gerry Rubin, Victor Franco, and Charlie Crookall for shouldering the bulk of the grind and negotiations with the City of Irvine. None of this is easy, and their considerable efforts have proved to be invaluable as we slowly progress into making this Museum a reality. Thanks to all of you.

Finally, best wishes to all of you for a safe and enjoyable summer.

Semper Fi,
Lt. Gen. Terry G. Robling

Do Museums Really Make A Difference?.. Continued from page 1

from his carrier days. I fondly recall many times spent at his house thumbing through his cruise books and making him tell me stories about his service and experiences on the carriers. I was in awe of it all. I knew that it is what I wanted to be a part of in my life. Every year as I got older, my desire to be a part of Naval Aviation never changed. By my teenage years, the Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum was the best thing to happen to me as it kept me focused on my goals and helped develop into the person I am today.

My volunteer experiences at the Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum allowed me to be exactly who I wanted to be and more significantly, taught me the importance of being a part of something bigger than myself. As a young man infatuated with military aviation, being able to share that love with other people while preserving the history of those before me is something that cannot be expressed



Docents Jonny Braun and Andrew Neel - circa 2015

lightly. The countless stories and lessons told by fellow docents, and Museum patrons who shared their personal experiences with the aircraft, fellow veterans and important operations are so important and need to be kept alive for future generations. Each of these individuals, along with their

personal stories and lessons motivated me to stick to my goals and desire to become a Naval Officer. People such as LtCol Richard Miller, MajGen Bob Butcher, LtCol Jay Bibler and so many others equally important to me are the great Americans I look up to and tell myself; "These are the people I hope to be like." These individuals, with their dedication to service, tradition, country, and family exemplify the values and characteristics that I hold true to myself. I am very grateful to each of these men for their encouragement, interest, and support. The time spent with me from such a young impressionable age has had a profound impact on me and my life now going on 20 years.

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MUSEUM RELOCATION UPDATE

Spring -- 2023



Paraphrasing Theodore Roosevelt: “Nothing in this world is worth having or worth doing unless it’s difficult and takes effort.” Regarding the relocation of the Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum (FLAM), no truer words have been spoken!

The transportation and re-establishment of an entire museum collection of aircraft and numerous other artifacts is, to say the least difficult, requiring a herculean effort. The Flying Leatherneck Historical Foundation (FLHF) Board, volunteers, supporters, and partners are committed to returning the Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum to its original home at *Great Park*, the former MCAS El Toro. In typical Marine Corps fashion, the Foundation and Museum team has met every challenge and are ready to put the MOUs and agreements into action. The City of Irvine has recently approved a draft transportation and storage lease agreement which funds the relocation of the museum collection to *Great Park*. The FLHF and city staff are finalizing the agreement and hope to begin preparation, disassembly, and crating of the museum’s aircraft collection by mid-summer. The collection will be stored, and maintenance and conservation operations established in hangar 297, the former “Raider County” hangar at El Toro. We are also finalizing discussions with a transportation firm that specializes in the movement and transportation of aircraft. These developments are a significant step forward in our endeavor.

Our next step will be to formalize an agreement with the City of Irvine for the erection of an interim museum facility in a portion of the *Cultural Terrace* where the original planned facility, hangar 296, is located. The city was unable to move forward with the restoration of hangar 296 but was committed to relocating the museum to *Great Park* and came up with an alternative. The city will be making a \$20 million dollar capital investment toward the interim museum facility in an adjacent parcel of land in the *Cultural Terrace* called *Cultural Terrace West*. This parcel is located approximately 300 yards from storage/restoration hangar 297. Work on the site has already begun with the publication of a Request for Proposal for site preparation, the prep work will take approximately 18-24 months. During this time period we will be performing aircraft restoration on 30 or so aircraft requiring varying levels of care and restoration. Most of the aircraft collection requires repairs for minor corrosion as they have been exposed to the elements for over 20 years. Some painting and canopy attention is needed as well. All the aircraft need a good, thorough washing!

Our design firm, *Siteline Productions, Inc.*, has provided complete architectural and design plans for the interim facility; it will be a world class museum facility we can all be proud of. Although smaller in size than hangar 296, the facility will house most of the aircraft collection and allow for a reduced number of planned exhibits. We already have plans for expansion and will continue to have discussions with the city for the eventual restoration and occupancy of either hangar 296 or 297 as the FLAM’s permanent museum. Your continual support is critical for us to move forward. We will shortly kick off our mid-year appeal but there’s no need to wait. Just visit our website at www.flyingleathernecks.org to make an online donation. By the way, also keep an eye out for our new website scheduled to go live in the next month.

Semper Fi,
Mike Aguilar

Do Museums Really Make A Difference?.. Continued from page 3

At 33 years old, I have not taken the most conventional route of applying to Officer Candidate School (OCS). Most individuals seeking a career as a military officer, follow a more traditional path for applying to OCS. First, cadets enter OCS after graduating from a 4-year university with a bachelor's degree. In some cases, active-duty enlisted personnel pursue a commission via various other avenues.

After graduating high-school, I did not have the financial means to go to a 4-year college. Therefore, I went to trade school and firefighting school. However, I made a commitment to myself that I would eventually finish my undergraduate degree and then apply to the Navy. Twelve years later and found myself at 30 years old working as a professional firefighter with the Yuma Fire Department. I was thinking that I would never be able to make my childhood dream come true. Fortunately, I met a coworker who is a retired US Marine Corps Gunnery Sergeant. After getting to know me and learning my story, he "strongly encouraged" me (as only a Gunny can!) to apply to school immediately and pursue my dream. Eighteen months later I graduated from Northern Arizona University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Emergency Management.

I called a Navy Officer Recruiter the day I was granted graduation status. As most know, the process of applying for OCS is challenging and a test of endurance. The initial paperwork and documents preparation for processing is tedious and requires great attention to detail. Many forms requiring all different types of information and signatures need to be followed attentively and timely. Upon getting a preliminary clearance from Navy Medical, I was then set with a date to take the Officer Aptitude Rating (OAR) exam, which I studied for approximately 6 months. This OAR exam is a critical component of the evaluation process and consists of 3 parts: reading comprehension, mathematics, and mechanical aptitude. After learning I had obtained a competitive passing score, the next day I was scheduled to go to the memorable Military Entrance Processing, better known as "MEPS." I was lodged at a government provided hotel room for individuals going through MEPS. Here, I met mostly kids who had just graduated high school and were applying to various branches of the armed forces. The next morning consisted of a 0300 wake up call for breakfast, and form up outside of MEPS at 0345 for a 0400 check in. MEPS was an experience that cannot be forgotten going from station to station of examinations, the uncomfortable "duck-walk," and then sitting in a chair praying I did not have any medical disqualifications. A few days later following MEPS, I was told by my recruiter

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The Flying Leatherneck's Legendary

TBM-3E AVENGER



The TBM-3E Avenger is one of the crown jewels of the Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum's aircraft collection and will be a very popular display when the museum reopens at *Great Park* in Irvine.¹

The storied history of the TBM-3E began in the early years of World War II. The TBM- Avenger had its genesis in 1939 when the United States Navy solicited bids for design and manufacture of a new torpedo bomber. On April 8, 1940, the Grumman Aircraft Company was contracted to develop the TBF Avenger. With its first flight on August 1, 1941, and first production delivery in January 1942, Grumman built a total 2,290 TBF bombers. Production ended in December 1943.²

Newly designated as the TBM, the Avenger was then manufactured by the Eastern Aircraft Division of the General Motors Corporation. During its production run, the company produced a total of 9,836 aircraft (2,882 TBM-1 and 4,664 TBM-3). The Avenger entered combat for the first in June 1942 during the Battle of Midway. This legendary aircraft would become the preeminent torpedo bomber of World War II, especially in the Pacific Theater of Operations.

The TBM Avenger's first combat performance was less than successful. At Midway, only one of six Avengers survived the battle. However, combat success would quickly come. At Guadalcanal, just five months later, the TBM Avenger would play a significant role in the Allied victory over the naval and air forces of Imperial Japan. One such example is the sinking of the Japanese battleship *Hiei*. The *Hiei* inflicted heavy damage on American cruisers and destroyers during combat operations on November 13, 1942. However, the *Hiei* was also seriously damaged. On the following day, the *Hiei* was relentlessly attacked by Avengers from Marine Corps squadron VMSB-131 (*Diamondbacks*). After four direct hits from aerial torpedoes, the *Hiei* sank.³

With the first powered turret ever installed on an aircraft, the Avenger was used by Marine torpedo bombing squadrons throughout the Pacific Theater. The Avenger became the Navy and Marine's standard torpedo and light bomber throughout the remainder of the Pacific War. It remained in operational service in a variety of roles for nearly twenty years.

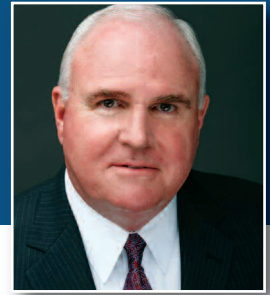
The TBM-3E Avenger in the Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum's collection was built by Eastern Aircraft and was

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PATRICK J. “PADDY” GOUGH

Colonel, USMC (Retired)

Vice Chairman of the Board



The Flying Leatherneck Historical Foundation is pleased to introduce Colonel Patrick J. “Paddy” Gough as our new Vice Chairman of the Board. Colonel Gough joined the Board of Directors in October 2022. He brings a wealth of senior management experience to the Foundation, both as a Marine Corps Officer and as a business executive in the private sector.

“Paddy” completed a distinguished 30-year Marine Corps career, as a Naval Aviator. During his Marine Corps service, he flew numerous types, models and series of fixed wing and rotary wing aircraft, specializing in the AH-1J, AH-1T (TOW) *Cobra* as well as the AH-1W *Super Cobra* and the newest attack helicopter, the AH-1Z *Viper*. In total, “Paddy” accumulated 4000 flight hours in peacetime and combat operations. At Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron One, he served as an instructor pilot and AH-1 Division Head. He completed eight overseas deployments, five of which were carrier-based and four of which were combat deployments to include *Operation Earnest Will* and *Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm*. After serving as the Commanding Officer of Marine Light/Attack Helicopter Squadron-169 (*Vipers*), he served as the G-3 for Third Marine Aircraft Wing. In advance of serving as the Commanding Officer of Marine Aircraft Group-39, “Paddy” was assigned as the Deputy G-3 for First Marine Expeditionary Force during *Operation Iraqi Freedom I* and as the G-3 for IMEF during *Operation Iraqi Freedom II*. His final active-duty assignment was as the Deputy Commander of Marine Corps Installations West (MCI-W).

Upon retiring from the Marine Corps in 2009, “Paddy” completed six years of corporate executive experience as the Executive Director of Human Resources and Organizational Development, as well as Interim Deputy CEO and Interim CEO for Orange County Transportation Authority. The OCTA a nationally recognized Top 10 multi-modal public transportation organization. Subsequently, “Paddy” became the COO of PKL Services, Inc, a leading global aerospace services company.¹ During his two-year tenure as CEO/President, Colonel Gough and PKL were the recipients of

numerous awards which included:

- Top 10 MRO Companies in 2021 by Aerospace and Defense Review
- Recognition in the Veterans Administration Special Edition of the USA Today
- Top 20 Dynamic CEOs of 2021 by the CEO Publication
- The 50 Most Admired Companies of 2021 by the Silicon Review
- The 20 Most Influential Business Leaders of 2021 by the Global Business Leaders
- The Top 10 Most Inspiring CEOs to Watch 2021 by the CIO Look
- The Top 10 Most Inspiring Business Leaders Making a Difference by Beyond Exclamation
- San Diego Top Workplace by the San Diego Union Tribune
- Best Employers for Veterans by Monster.com and Military.com
- The Most Influential Businessperson of the Year, 2021 by Prime Review
- Expose’ by the Montel Williams Television Series Military Makeover: Operation Career
- The Top 10 Most Inspiring CEOs to Watch 2022 by the CIO Look

Colonel Gough retired from PKL as CEO/President and Vice Chairman of the PKL Board of Directors in December 2021.

“Paddy” is currently the CEO/Founder of *Poseidon Consulting LLC* and recently joined an international business brokerage, *Cairn LLC*, as a full equity partner.

Colonel Gough has a Bachelor of Arts degree in History from California State University Fullerton and a Master of Science Degree, with Distinction, in National Security and Strategic Studies from The Naval War College. He was the first Marine named to the prestigious *Mahan Scholars Program* at the Naval War College.

In addition to his work with the FLHF/FLAM, “Paddy” is currently a board member of The Semper Fi/America’s Fund,

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Do Museums Really Make A Difference?.. Continued from page 5

that I was cleared to continue in my process. I was also told it was time to start finalizing my packet for submission to the selection board.

Unfortunately, I was not selected on my first submission. However, I used this setback as motivation to push further and improve upon my previous submission package. At the time of this writing, I am currently waiting the decision/approval of the next selection board. I am certainly hoping for the result I have been working towards, becoming a part of the Naval Aviation family.

Carrying on the tradition and legacy of Naval Aviation as set by those before me is largely a part of why I am so drawn to this career path. I proudly volunteered at the Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum, and I would absolutely do it all over again. It was with great joy to be a small piece of the Flying Leathernecks family. The Museum team (staff, volunteers, and leaders) are all committed to preserving the history of prior generations, and to assure them that their distinguished service and sacrifice is not forgotten.

I hope that my story can inspire people (especially young people) with a passion for aviation to never give up on their goals and push for what they are truly passionate about. I am so grateful for all the people I have met in my association with the Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum, and all the inspiration and memories that I will carry with me throughout my life.

I would like to thank each person that has encouraged and helped me along my journey. It is my wish to honor everyone in the Flying Leatherneck family for all you have done for me by becoming the best possible Naval Officer I can.



Neel Family - Christmas 2022

Do museums really make a difference? Absolutely! Museums are a unique place that can literally transform a young person's life and set them on a life course of duty, honor, commitment, and Patriotism. The Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum will forever be a part of me.

¹ LtCol Richard "Dick" Miller was a long-time member of the Foundation's Board of Directors and served as the Volunteer Coordinator for several years. LtCol Miller passed away in June 2014.

Patrick J. "Paddy" Gough... Continued from page 7

Cal State Fullerton's Center for Oral and Public History, CSUF's Veterans' Resource Center, MCAA, Merrill Lynch and City National Bank Client Advisory Boards, and boards of several other small companies.

¹ In 2016, PKL Services, Inc. was ranked by *Bloomberg Government* as one of the Top 20 Worldwide Defense Training and Simulation Opportunities.

TBM-3E AVENGER... Continued from page 6

accepted by the US Navy on June 16, 1945, less than two months before the close of the war. In July 1945, this *Avenger* squadron was stationed aboard the escort carrier *USS Cape Gloucester* in the East China Sea. The museum's *Avenger* never participated in combat operations. Rather, its active service was spent with various Naval training units before being retired in 1962. Sold as surplus in 1964, it served as a fire bomber until 1988 when it was acquired by the Museum. This aircraft is on loan from the National Museum of the Marine Corps. The airframe is currently painted in the colors of VMTB-132 (*The Crying Red Asses*).



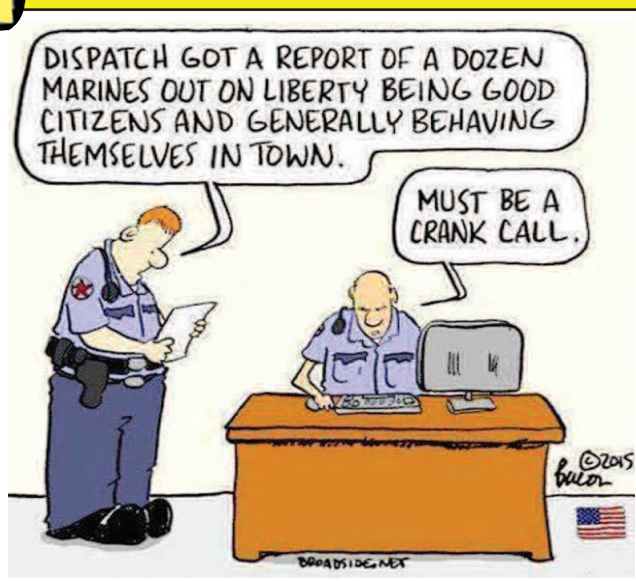
Marines of VMSB-131 (Diamondbacks), October 1942, South Pacific

¹ **TB** – Type (Torpedo Bomber); **M** – Manufacturer (General Motors); **3** – Version or Variant; **E** – Special Mission (Radar Equipped Antisubmarine Warfare)

² Grumman production of the TBF ended to clear the manufacturing plant to produce the F6F *Hellcat* fighter.

³ During its combat deployment at Guadalcanal, Marines of VMSB-131 scored 14 confirmed kills and six “probables” with torpedo attacks against Japanese shipping. The squadron also scored six direct hits against Japanese ships with conventional bombs. However, the cost of these victories was high. The squadron lost eight pilots and 17 other aircrewmembers killed in action.

SNAFU





LIEUTENANT COLONEL RICHARD C. MANGRUM

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
WORLD WAR II

for service as set forth in the following CITATION:

The President of the United States of America takes pleasure in presenting the **NAVY CROSS** to Richard C. Mangrum, Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps, for extraordinary heroism and distinguished service in the line of his profession Leader and as a Pilot in Marine Scout-Bombing Squadron Two Hundred Thirty-Two (VMSB-232), Marine Air Group Twenty-Three (MAG-23), First Marine Aircraft Wing, in aerial combat with enemy Japanese forces in the Solomon Islands Area from 20 August 1942 to 15 September 1942. Commanding a Navy and Marine Corps striking force of sixteen planes, Lieutenant Colonel Mangrum intercepted and attacked an enemy task force of surface craft which was planning to attack our beachhead on Guadalcanal. Striking with lightning-like precision, his planes dropped all their bombs before the enemy surface craft could initiate evasive action, making a direct hit on the largest transport, blasting men and debris into the water, and setting the ship on fire. After a cruiser was also hit and left burning, later to disappear, the Japanese were forced to withdraw and abandon their mission. Lieutenant Colonel Mangrum's high quality of leadership and the aggressive spirit of his command in action contributed in large measure to the success achieved by our forces and were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

OOPS!! In early 1941, before the United States entered World War II, Naval and Marine aviators were hard at work training in Southern California. Sometimes that training didn't do as planned! Here is a picture of a Douglas SBD Dauntless from Marine Squadron VMB-2. This fighter aircraft had an "encounter" with a house at Rockwell Field. Rockwell Field was a former Army Air Corps training facility located at North Island Naval Air Station, Coronado Island. Looking none the worse for wear, here is a picture of the same house in 2022.



Then - 1941



Now - 2022

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2020-2022 SAN DIEGO VETERAN MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

Major League Baseball Supports Marines in the Pacific

Ball Caps for the Black Sheep



Marines of the Black Sheep squadron at Vella Lavella, sporting their St. Louis Cardinals ball caps and bats - 1943.

squadron of pilots and airmen based on the island of Vella Lavella. This squadron of pilots and airmen formed VMA-214. Because of their somewhat “colorful” reputation, the Marines of VMA-214 became known as the *Black Sheep*.

Baseball style caps were very popular among Marines deployed to the Pacific Theatre of Operations during World War II. However, the harsh environment in the tropical South Pacific quickly destroyed these sun-shading ball caps. As such, Boyington sought assistance from Major League Baseball. He ordered the squadron’s Intelligence Officer (Captain Frank Walton) to reach out to the Commissioner of Baseball to ask for help in obtaining baseball caps.

Virtually no aspect of daily life in the United States was immune from the impact of World War II. Professional sports were certainly no exception. Athletes, coaches, and team officials from every professional sports organization put their careers on hold to serve their country during this time.

As the 1943 season wound down, baseball fans were anticipating the World Series. The *New York Yankees* were leading the American league, while the *St. Louis Cardinals* had control of the National League. It would be a rematch of the '42 World Series won by the *Cardinals* in five games.¹ However, with war raging across the globe, baseball seemed somehow less important.

Meanwhile, in the Pacific, US Marines were taking the fight to the forces of Imperial Japan. Among these Marines was an experienced officer named Gregory “Pappy” Boyington. A Major at the time, Boyington commanded a relatively new

In his letter to the Commissioner, Captain Walton offered a proposition: The pilots of VMA-214 promised to shoot down one Japanese aircraft for each ball cap sent to them at Vella Lavella. Apparently, *St. Louis* were the only Major League team to respond. After the 1943 World Series was over, the

Cardinals sent the squadron about 25 of ball caps plus several bats and baseballs.

This proved to be an excellent investment on the part of the *Cardinals*. However, instead of 25 Japanese aircraft destroyed for each ball cap, the aviators of VMA-214 ultimately shot down 48. Well done, *Black Sheep*!



Squadron Commander Maj. Gregory "Pappy" Boyington and pilot First Lieutenant Chris McGee trading Cardinals ball caps for Japanese "kill" stickers.

¹ Indeed, the *Yankees* would return the favor in 1943. The “Bronx Bombers” defeated the *Cardinals* in five games to win the World Series Championship.

THE FEW, THE PROUD...THE GENEROUS

November 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023

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