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## **Remembering Operation Frequent Wind – A Powerful Evening of Reflection and Tribute**



On April 29, the Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum hosted a deeply moving and patriotic event at Hangar 297 to honor the 50th anniversary of Operation Frequent Wind, the final evacuation mission during the fall of Saigon in 1975. More than two dozen Vietnam veterans, along with local leaders and members of the community, gathered to commemorate this pivotal moment in military history.

Central to the evening was a presentation by Retired Colonel Gerry Berry, the Marine pilot of the CH-46 helicopter known as *Lady Ace 09*, which is now proudly displayed at the museum. Col. Berry recounted his emotional and harrowing experience flying the last U.S. ambassador and others out of a collapsing Saigon, sharing personal memories and reflections that underscored both the chaos of the moment and the courage it demanded.

Guests also heard from Irvine Councilmember James Mai, whose own family fled Vietnam just days before its fall, and from other veterans who offered powerful perspectives on service, sacrifice, and the importance of remembering history. The evening served not only as a tribute to those who served in Vietnam, but also as a

Events like this remind us why preserving these stories and aircraft matters. As we prepare to open the new Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum in 2027, we remain committed to bringing the past to life and honoring those who shaped it.

[WATCH THE LIVE STREAM VIDEO OF THE EVENT](#)

[SUPPORT OUR MUSEUM AND MORE EVENTS LIKE THIS ONE!](#)

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## UCI Students Begin Hands-On Restoration of the Curtiss Jenny

This month marks an exciting milestone in our partnership with UC Irvine's Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering School. Students and faculty have officially begun hands-on work restoring the historic Curtiss Jenny aircraft in our hangar at the Great Park. These exceptional students—ranging from undergraduates to graduate-level engineers—are applying their award-winning experience in drone and fixed-wing design to the meticulous process of aircraft restoration.

Their efforts reflect more than technical skill—they represent our shared mission to preserve and teach Marine Corps aviation history. While many of our educational exhibits are still in development, this collaboration underscores our commitment to real-world learning and inspiring the next generation of aerospace professionals.

Scroll down to see behind-the-scenes photos of the students in action and watch the rebirth of a legendary aircraft take flight!



CHECK OUT THE AIRCRAFT AVAILABLE FOR SUPPORT

# Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum

## Featured at the Hoag Classic



The Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum had the honor of participating in the prestigious **Hoag Classic**, Orange County's premier PGA TOUR Champions event held annually at Newport Beach Country Club. Set against the backdrop of world-

connecting with attendees and sharing our mission to preserve and honor Marine Corps aviation history.

As one of the most anticipated sporting events in the region, the Hoag Classic draws thousands of visitors and supports dozens of nonprofit organizations through its charitable giving. We were incredibly grateful to be included among this year's beneficiaries and were presented with a generous **\$5,000 donation** in support of our museum's mission.

Our presence at the Hoag Classic allowed us to engage with a broad audience, raise awareness of the museum's upcoming opening in Irvine's Great Park, and celebrate our shared commitment to community, service, and legacy. We thank the Hoag Classic team for their generosity and hospitality, and we look forward to continuing this impactful partnership in the years to come.

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## Congressman Dave Min's Office Visits the Hangar

We were honored to welcome Matt Kern, District Director for Congressman Dave Min (CA-47), to the Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum for a tour and discussion about potential federal support for our mission.

Congressman Min, who began serving in the U.S. House of Representatives in 2025, represents California's 47th District, encompassing cities such as Irvine, Newport Beach, Costa Mesa, Huntington Beach, and Seal Beach. A former UC Irvine law professor and California State Senator, Rep. Min has been a strong advocate for education, veterans, and community engagement.

During the visit, Mr. Kern expressed the Congressman's enthusiasm for the museum's work and discussed potential avenues for federal funding as Congress develops its grants program in the coming weeks. We are grateful for Congressman Min's support and look forward to hosting him at the museum during the upcoming congressional recess.

This engagement underscores our commitment to preserving Marine Corps aviation history and fostering educational opportunities for the community.



## Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum Featured in Vintage Aviation News

We are proud to share that the Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum was recently featured in *Vintage Aviation News*, a leading source for historic aviation stories and preservation efforts around the world. The article highlights our exciting re-establishment in Irvine, California, and provides a detailed look at our journey—from the museum's closure at MCAS Miramar to our revitalization at the Great Park.

The piece celebrates the return of the museum's collection of historic Marine Corps aircraft and our ongoing commitment to restoring and displaying them for public education and inspiration. It also recognizes the many volunteers, donors, and community leaders who have played a crucial role in making our new home a reality.

We're honored to be included in such a respected publication and grateful for the recognition of our mission to preserve Marine Corps aviation history for future generations.

enthusiasts everywhere!



[READ THE ARTICLE HERE](#)

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## Our Museum Featured in the LA Times

We're proud to share a moving story recently featured in the *LA Times Daily Pilot* that highlights the powerful connection between veterans, remembrance, and reconciliation. The article follows SoCal Marine veteran Chuck Meadows, who—after decades—returned personal items taken from a North Vietnamese soldier during the Vietnam War to the soldier's family in Hanoi.

This deeply human story unfolded with the help of Heroes Hall and was made possible by the kind of dedication to memory and history that we strive to uphold at the Flying Leatherneck Aviation Museum. It's a poignant reminder of the importance of honoring all who were impacted by war, and the role museums play in preserving those stories with integrity and respect.

We're grateful to *LA Times* and Heroes Hall for spotlighting such meaningful work and encouraging dialogue, healing, and remembrance.



## Do you have a special connection to a Marine Aircraft? Your support can help!

Each of our aircraft has a rich history and a story to tell. By supporting our restoration efforts, you contribute to preserving these flying legends for future generations. Your donation helps cover the costs of materials, labor, and expertise required to bring these historic aircraft back to their former glory.

Your support ensures that these iconic aircraft's legacy lives on. Together, we can honor the past and inspire the future.

Click below to search our inventory of 34 aircraft and make your donation for restoration today!

[CHECK OUT THE AIRCRAFT AVAILABLE FOR SUPPORT](#)

## Have you Become a Member Yet?

...2027, we invite you to join our  
Membership program. This exclusive  
group of supporters will play a crucial  
role in shaping the future of the  
museum and preserving the storied  
legacy of Marine Corps aviation. Get  
exclusive access, discounts and more!



[LEARN MORE](#)

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## You Won't Want to Miss....

Each month you'll discover the latest milestones we've achieved, meet some of the dedicated individuals making this vision a reality, and get a glimpse of what to expect when we open our doors. Your support and enthusiasm fuel our journey, and we can't wait to share more with you each step of the way. Thank you for being a valued part of our community. Stay tuned for exciting news and exclusive previews!



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