

September 2017



Fellow Twirly Birds:

We lost Twirly Bird stalwart, Les Morris Recipient, past treasurer and historian, Bill Yarber, on July 11, 2017. Bill was in hospice care at his home in Plano, Texas. Twirly Bird, Marty Pociask, captured many of Bill's accomplishments and contributions in the Helicopter Foundation Trailblazers column published in the spring 2017 Rotor magazine.

Copies of Marty's profile were available at Bill's well attended service on July 19<sup>th</sup> in Frisco, Texas. Several Twirly Birds and members of the helicopter industry were present at the service. Bill's HFI Trail Blazer profile is attached to this newsletter.

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We were pleased to note that the Helicopter Association Board of Directors includes: Twirly Bird, Randy Rowles, co-owner of the Helicopter Institute Inc., recipient of HAI's Flight Instructor of the year award, and HAI Igor Sikorsky Humanitarian award. Randy is an FAA Examiner, Master Instructor, and ROTORCRAFT PRO columnist.

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Twirly Bird, Jim Wisecup is Vice Chairman of the HAI Board. Jim is Assistant Chief Pilot at Air Methods. You may recall that Jim was mentioned in the January 2016 Special Operations Association magazine. Jim was the aircraft commander of the lead helicopter inserting a "Hatchet force" into Laos on July 20, 1970. Jim's aircraft was hit with a rocket propelled grenade that did not detonate, but damaged the engine and triggered a fire. Jim flew the aircraft out of the immediate area before it crashed. Wisecup and other survivors were rescued by a second helicopter that dropped a ladder and ropes through the jungle canopy. Wisecup, crew members, and other survivors climbed the ladder into the rescue ship.

September 2017

According to Wikipedia

"A **Hatchet Force** or **Hatchet Team** was a special operations team of American and South Vietnamese members of MACV-SOG during the Vietnam War, who operated in small covert operations along the Ho Chi Minh trail from 1966.<sup>[2]</sup> The units specialized in search and destroy missions and in locating missing American servicemen in Laos, Cambodia and North Vietnam."

Your Twirly Bird leader can personally attest to the fact that MACV-SOG Hatchet Force operations were "challenging" missions in the best of times.

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Twirly Bird, Randy Mains, author, and public speaker, continues with his provocative and insightful "My 2 Cents Worth" columns in Rotorcraft Pro magazine. Randy is the Chief CRM/AMRM Instructor for Oregon Aero. According to Randy's web site, he has authored five books, (of course they are for sale). Of interest to some of us old guys is one book entitled, Dear Mom I Am Alive, based on his letters to his mother while serving in Viet Nam.

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Yet another Twirly Bird author is Dick Kirkland. Some of you may remember Dick from his days as a salesman for Hughes Helicopters. Born in 1923, Richard was raised in a rural community in California during the Great Depression. At the outbreak of WWII he joined the Army Air Corps and served ace of aces. Lt. Kirkland flew 103 combat missions in P-38 and P-47 fighters dogfighting Japanese Zeros, attacking enemy installations, ships, and flying escort for bombers. After WWII, Lt. Kirkland was assigned to a top secret project of testing atomic bombs in the Marshall Islands.

During the Korean War, Captain Kirkland traded his wings for rotors and flew 69 helicopter missions rescuing downed pilots from behind enemy lines and snatching wounded soldiers from the battlefield at the 8055 MASH, home of the infamous "Hawkeye." Major Kirkland was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, five Air Medals, the Air Force Commendation Medal and both the U.S. and Korean Presidential citations for his service in WWII and the Korean War.

Richard sketched and painted his surroundings as a boy in California, writing short stories to match his artwork. During his military service he continued, sketching and painting his surroundings, capturing history as it occurred. He used his art for inspiration in his writing. He has written and published numerous magazine short stories and articles, and four books

September 2017

about his experiences. His last book "Wide Place in the Road," is historic fiction, based on true historic incidents with real characters that Richard knew and associated with during the span of the book from the Great Depression through WWII.

Richard has been a featured speaker at the National Press Club in Washington D.C., and was interviewed on both the American and Canadian History Channels. He and his wife Maria, who is also an artist, have nine children, sixteen grandchildren and one great grandson.

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Kelley Parlier's company, Yes Communications, has worked diligently to find a suitable and reasonably priced venue for the 2018 Las Vegas Twirly Bird reception on February 27<sup>th</sup>. We have committed to use the Westgate Resort and Hotel – Old Hilton connected to the Convention Center. Unfortunately HAI could not provide us with a free reception room in Las Vegas.

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We need your input and advice regarding the Twirly Bird organization and finances. Our sources of revenue are the initiation fees, the annual dues, life time memberships, and the half and half raffle at the reception. Our expenses include mailing, (because some members do not use e-mail), costs for pins, membership cards, postage etc. The major expense is the annual meeting/reception during Heli-Expo. Usually the Helicopter Association provides us with a reception room gratis. The Twirly Birds pay for the setup, (microphone, podiums, bar tender, etc.) For the past several years we have operated at a slight loss each year, gradually reducing our rather modest bank account.

The upcoming 2018 reunion in Las Vegas presents a real challenge since nothing is free or included in Las Vegas. We will have to pay for the reception room and the associated charges. We project that the Las Vegas reception will cost a bit more than we anticipate having in our bank account.

One stopgap solution is to eliminate the free drinks. Free drinks have become somewhat of a tradition, (but not a long tradition), that were previously financed by the generosity of a few Twirly Birds. Unfortunately during the past few years we have not had anyone offering to subsidize all or a portion of the reception.

September 2017

We are soliciting your suggestions regarding the annual and initiation dues structure. Perhaps there is the possibility of either corporate or individual sponsors or other avenues to finance the annual reception? Please share your thoughts and suggestions with me, Steve Sullivan 408 348 5780, [srs@jma.com](mailto:srs@jma.com)

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A note to the members from Twirly Bird V.P. Jim Kettles:

"As we begin our approach to the annual Twirly Birds meeting this year in Las Vegas, I would like to again ask for your support of our humble organization. First, I want to encourage everyone to invite *at least one* prospective and qualified member to join our fraternal organization. In the interest of continuing to bolster our membership, we should all be on the lookout for new members. And speaking of membership, are you aware that the Twirly Birds offers a very inexpensive way to support our group and dispense with the annual dues? Forever. It's our Twirly Birds Lifetime Member category. For a one time donation of \$500, you can show your dedication and support to the TBs, and also receive a special life member lapel pin. Steve and I are both life members as well as several other TB members."

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We need your nominees for Twirly Bird Associate memberships!  
We need your nominees for the Les Morris award!  
We need your participation and suggestions!

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**Mark your calendar, February 27, 2018 [Westgate Las Vegas Resort & Casino](#)  
3000 Paradise Road, The Westgate was the Hilton Hotel connected to the  
Convention Center**

Please take a few minutes and send me a story, news item, or just a suggestion for the newsletter. I would really appreciate hearing comments regarding the newsletter. My e-mail is [srs@jma.com](mailto:srs@jma.com). Or if it is easier, just call me at 408 348 5780

KEEP YOUR ROTOR IN THE GREEN!

Steve Sullivan