

GHOST LORE

POST REUNION UPDATE



MCAA - 531 Gray Ghost Squadron (VMF(N)-531, VMF(AW)-531, VMFA-531)

Website: <https://531grayghostsquadron.org/>

email: Commanders email: Richard_elliott@sbcglobal.net

A Note from the Commander: Richard "Rich" Elliott

Hello Marines and Families. I hope this edition of the Ghost Lore finds you all well and looking forward to this year's reunion in San Diego. I won't repeat what is provided elsewhere in this edition, but Puma says plans are coming together well and we are looking forward to another big crowd this year. So, on with some other news.

The Board of Directors met at MCAA in May to discuss important squadron business. To aid in ensuring maximum participation by our membership the board provides the following:

A motion was made to amend the by-laws:

- email voting for elections - The secretary will be responsible to ensure emails are sent and tracked To ensure current Members (dues paid up to date) have the opportunity to vote. We recognize that we are still maintaining a handful of members via "snail mail". We will continue to support that effort.
- ability of Board Members to attend meetings via video/telephone is approved.
- an impetus to highly encourage Directors to serve on a committee as a member or chair is desired.
- Commander will be allowed to serve more than one term, after a gap in service, so no back-to-back tours.
- assistance with online MCSF applications by the Squadron Scholarship Committee. Remember we have an MCSF and second chance scholarship opportunities for Gray Ghost members children and grandchildren.
- upon dissolution of the squadron, all operating funds will be disbursed to the remaining members. To be clear, there are no plans in place to dissolve the squadron at any time.
- Scholarship funds will be donated to the MCSF, as monies donated must be distributed to their intended use as designated by law.

Of notable importance was the effort to find a new commander. Due to COVID, I was extended twice making my run as Commander 5 years long. It's time for someone younger and more able to step in, Rusty Smith was nominated by the Executive Committee. We'll have a vote of the Membership to approve his appointment via email and snail mail in August. We will share the results and a few other things we are working on for the reunion.

In addition to our board meeting, MCAA has informally announced that we are forming a Fighter Foray as a MCAA At Large unit at either the Group or Wing Level. This will provide support for squadrons similar to the Gray Ghost Squadron that may need support due to enrollment numbers or just needing more support to host meetings and other related functions. The details for the formation of the unit, to

include By-Laws are in the works now. There is a leadership team that is working the details along side plans for a Phyter/Phantom Phoray in 2026. As a member of that team I will work to provide as much info on the plans as they become available as we move forward. This increases our abilities to grow our ranks as a stand alone squadron under the new unit and grow MCAA.

We have had several members step up in various ways to assist with managing and growing the squadron. I want to recognize a notable effort by our Membership Chairperson, Doug Winslow, who has done an outstanding job bringing on new members. Thank you Doug! Additionally, Jim Smith and Richard Piechocki have done outstanding work in publishing the Ghost Lore and getting the new web site up and running. Thank you Jim, and Rich P.! We will share more about individual performances at the reunion in San Diego.

In closing, I want to thank each of you for your support of our squadron over the years and ask that you look upon the upcoming changes with an open mind. I believe the formation of the new unit will serve to support more units as well as offer more support for those that currently exist. I am looking forward to continuing to serve along side you as we continue to improve the squadrons numbers and capability.

Respectfully,

Richard Elliott (Rich)
Commander, MCAA 531 Gray Ghost Squadron at Large

MCAA - 531 Gray Ghost Squadron

VMF (N)-531, VMF (AW)-531, VMFA-531



We're on the Web!

Visit us at (updated):

<https://531grayghostsquadron.org/>

Ghost Lore

Jim Smith, Editor

3155 Eaton Rd., Apt. 64

Green Bay, Wisconsin 54311

VMFA 531 Gray Ghosts Officers and Board of Directors

CO: Richard Elliott

Deputy CO: Mike "Horse" Frese

Treasurer: Roy "Puma" Pearson

Secretary: Roman Makuch

E-Mail Administrator: Communication Team

Flight Surgeon: Dr. Tip Putnum

PX: Roman Makuch

Chaplain: Vacant

Scholarships: Roy "Puma" Pearson

Webmasters: Richard Piechocki, Mario Menir, Rick Niedner

Ghost Lore Editor: Jim Smith

Past CO: Roman Makuch

Membership Chairman: Doug Winslow

Reunion 2024 Schedule of Events

THE REUNION EVENTS BELOW ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE (last update: June 4th)

Tuesday September 10th

4-7pm - Welcome Reception (Miramar Inn)

Wednesday September 11th

8:30am-2pm - Wild Animal Park

2pm-4pm - Simulator/Squadron Tour

5-8pm BOD meeting (at Roy Pearson's home)

Evening – Free Time

Thursday September 12th - (all at Roy Pearson's home)

10am-Noon - Member Meeting

Noon-1pm BBQ Luncheon

1-3pm Scholarship Auction

3-6pm Bingo

Friday September 13th

8am-11:30 MCRD Graduation

Noon - 1pm Lunch

1 - 3pm Midway Tour

4 - 5pm No Host bar in the Main Bar (Happy Hour) - O'Club

5 - 8pm Banquet Dinner – O'Club

SPEAKER

LtGen Terry “Guts” Robling – former DCS Air

Saturday, September 14th

8am - 10am -Farewell Breakfast at Miramar Inn.

TRANSPORTATION : You will need a vehicle to get to MCAS Miramar from the airport and back. Taxi/Uber/Lyft drivers can bring you on base from the gate to the Miramar Inn – after filling out some paperwork. Most group events are planned to be on base or nearby. We are planning to rent 15-passenger vans for transport to the various events. So, once you get to the Miramar Inn, your transportation to the various Group events will be accommodated.

BASE ACCESS: For those without a current Military ID/Base Access pass, you will have to be cleared on base for the week. On the Reunion Application will be a request for your personal info so the base can clear you for access. Since almost all attendees will be former Marines or their families, this shouldn't be a big deal.

For comments or suggestions, please email the Reunion Coordinator. Roy Pearson: F18Puma@san.rr.com

Hello Gray Ghost Squadron Member,

I hope this summer finds you and your family in good health and happiness. I write to advise you that several of our Squadron mates' dues have expired or are about to expire in a few months on Sept 30th, 2024. We appreciate everyone staying current with dues. Our rates remain reasonable at \$15 per year or \$40 for 3 years. I have attached a downloadable application. Please take the time to complete the application so we can confirm our records are current. Simple things like phone numbers and email addresses can change. We have new options for electronic payment; Zelle, Paypal and Venmo. Of course, we still accept a written check. Please forward your application and payment to our treasurer, Roy Pearson, as listed on the application.

If you haven't yet checked it out, go to our new Squadron webpage at <https://531grayghostsquadron.org/> There you will find the latest edition of the Ghost Lore and information on our upcoming Reunion this September in San Diego. The Reunion will be held at MCAS Miramar beginning Tues, Sept 10th through Sat, Sept 15th, 2024. Scheduled events include the Wild Animal Park Tour, a Squadron Tour, Scholarship Auction, MCRD San Diego Graduation, USS Midway Tour and culminating with our banquet dinner Friday evening. It will be a busy week and I'm looking forward to catching up with my old squadron mates. I hope to see you there.

Earlier this year our I.T. Team created a Membership Status listing on the squadron webpage to allow members to check their dues status. Go to <https://531grayghostsquadron.org/> homepage. Scroll down to *Squadron Membership* and click *Learn More*. Then scroll down to "Check Your Membership Status Here". Everyone is listed in alphabetical order. If you believe there is an error, do not hesitate to contact me at email: blacklabshunt@aol.com or my cell at (559) 859-3825.

Thanks and Semper Fi,

Doug Winslow

Membership Committee, 531 Gray Ghost Squadron



MCAA 531 Gray Ghost Squadron Membership Application Form

Date: _____ **New** **Renewal** **Status (Check all that apply)**
 Name: _____ Active Duty
 Nickname/Callsign: _____ **Member of MCAA?**
 Address: _____ Reserve
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Hon. Discharge
 Phone: (H) _____ (C) _____ (W) _____ Retired
 Email: _____ Navy
 Spouse's Name: _____ Civilian
 Dates Served in 531: _____
 Highest Grade/Title: _____
 Current Employer: _____
 Will you serve on a Committee? Yes No
 Duties and Comments on 531 tour (use back if needed):

Dues
 \$15 for one Year
\$40 for three Years
 (Dues Year: 1 Oct – 30 Sep)

Please send membership information to my friend/colleague:
 Name: _____ Email _____
 Address: _____

Payment Totals:

Gray Ghost Membership:	\$ _____
Memorial Fund:	\$ _____
Scholarship Fund:	\$ _____
Grand Total:	\$ _____

Email or Mail Application to:
 Roy Pearson
 12033 Blue Diamond Ct., San Diego, CA 92131
 E-Mail: F18Puma@san.rr.com
 For Questions, Call: (858) 547-0878

Make Checks Payable to: 531 Gray Ghost Squadron	PayPal/Zelle Payment to: GrayGhostSquadron@gmail.com	Venmo Payment to: @MCAA531GrayGhostSquadron
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MCAA Membership is recommended, but not required

MCAA Application for Membership

New Renewal Email to: MCAA@flymcaa.org Today's Date: _____

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____ Telephone: _____

Rank/Grade/Title: _____ e-Mail: _____

Active Retired Former Marine Other

MCAA Membership

Digital Only - \$15.00 1 YEAR - \$40.00 3 YEAR - \$110.00 5 YEAR - \$175.00

Marine Corps Aviation Association, 715 Broadway Street, P.O. Box 296, Quantico, Virginia 22134

2024 Scholarship Committee Report

Our MCSF Scholarship is a perpetual scholarship. While the 531 Gray Ghost Squadron's initial investment doesn't cover the amount of each year's award, the MCSF supplements our endowed earnings to provide a significant minimum scholarship.

The MCSF received 6 applications from students applying for our MCAA 531 Gray Ghost Scholarship (children/grandchildren of former members of the Active-Duty Grey Ghost Squadron). Of these, 5 were children and 1 was a grandchild. The online application process is tedious and difficult to navigate - especially because of our two special exceptions (grandchildren allowed and a waiver of the income eligibility threshold). Applicants have to provide a lot of documentation and are required to submit 3 different essays.

The MCSF chose Rylie Hunter, daughter of Sgt Donnie Hunter, for an award in the amount of \$2,500. Rylie will be a sophomore, attending California State University - Fullerton. Her GPA was 2.68 (out of 4.0) and her family income was under the MCSF's income eligibility threshold.

Two of the 6 applicants were deemed to be disqualified - one because the grandparents never were in VMFA-531 and the other because he accelerated his studies and will be graduating this Summer.

The 3 qualified applicants who were not selected by the MCSF were entered in the "Second Chance" Scholarship process - which is administered by the Gray Ghost Squadron Board of Directors. The Board voted to approve an award of \$500 to all 3 remaining applicants. These award winners were Benjamin Sherwin (GPA 2.28), son of Captain Allan Sherwin; and Matthew (GPA 3.19) and Samantha (GPA 3.73) Pearson, children of Col Roy Pearson. Benjamin will be a Sophomore at Wayne State University. Matthew and Samantha will both be attending the University of San Diego - Matthew as a Senior and Samantha as a Freshman.

Of the Scholarship awardees, the family income ranges were between \$18,000 and \$136,000. The MCSF income eligibility threshold was \$117,000 for family income in 2022.

At last year's Squadron Reunion in Pensacola, the Scholarship auction garnered \$740. These funds will be available for future "Second Chance" Scholarship awards.

Thanks to those who donated items for auction, and for your donations that we usually receive with your Membership Applications to assist these students with their education costs. These scholarship donations are Tax Deductible.

The window for the 2025-2026 Academic year MCSF Scholarship applications will be January 1st, 2025. For more info go to MCSF.org.

Roy Alan Pearson

Scholarship Committee Chairman
MCAA 531 Gray Ghost Squadron

Commander's Saved Rounds

Marines, Communication, rather effective communication is just about the hardest thing we do. I have been remiss in getting the word out in a timely manner. No excuses, I just haven't performed to expectations. My promise to you in the future is for timely communication going forward. We have a larger leadership team than we did last year. This will allow us to share the work across many hands.

Changes in Communication: The effort to provide electronic communications from squadron members to Gray Ghost leadership for membership, including banking is being rolled out. Roy "Puma" Pearson has led the effort to move us into the electronic age. There are plans to include reunion registration and payments for the 2024 Reunion electronically. Currently you can access the electronic membership form on the squadron's web site: (531grayghostsquadron.org), click on "More" in the top right corner of the home page, then "Membership" in the drop-down menu.

The future of the 531 Gray Ghost Squadron: As many of you may remember, we previously discussed several options for growing the squadron. Some of these options were discussed with MCAA. I am happy to inform you that MCAA is moving forward to create a larger group where squadrons will have an ability to operate autonomously, but under the umbrella of larger organizations - like a Wing or MAG. This will give smaller squadrons the ability to ride the wave of the larger organization and hopefully make it more affordable for more squadron mates to attend. There is a team of folks from the leadership of the Phantom Phoray, which now includes me, that are working out the details. We are probably two years away from incorporating a plan. I will provide details via the Ghost Lore as they become available.

MCAA Solicitation: The Marine Corps Aviation Association (MCAA) is a 501(c19) non-profit organization that recognizes professional excellence in Marine aviation, educates the public on its history and heritage, safeguards its future by publishing the recipients of the 28 Marine Corps Aviation Awards annually, and supports the fraternal bond of its membership. This is why we exist, which ultimately allows us to maintain contact with those we served with many years ago. While not mandatory, we encourage your membership with our parent organization. This issue of the Ghost Lore has the new Membership Form for joining our reunion squadron as well as the MCAA. For the digital form you can fill out and submit online, go to our website, 531grayghostsquadron.org.

SAVE the Date: September 10-14, 2024. Plans are well underway for the 2024 reunion in San Diego. Our newly elected treasurer, Roy Pearson, is the lead for the event. See the squadron website at 531grayghostsquadron.org, for details and updates. Click on the "Upcoming Reunion" link in the top right corner of our webpage.