

UH-34 PILOT EXTRAORDINAIRE?

The day of his flight, 3 August 2012, many reported hearing screams of fear throughout the Boston area. Although those reports are unconfirmed as of yet, the story remains true. After 28 years out of the cockpit, Mad Mex flew Yankee November 19 (YN-19, aircraft BuNo 150570), from Hanscom Field. His 30-minute flight was a sight to behold.

It's a bird, no it's a plane, no it's...Lieutenant Colonel Art "Mad Mex" Sifuentes, USMC (Ret), flying a piston-powered Sikorsky UH-34D Sea Horse.



Colonel Jim "Trigger" Schafer, USMC (Ret), the pilot-in-command, describes the incident: "Once he was in his flight suit, before any of one us could offer him assistance climbing into the cockpit, he scaled the [13 foot+/-] side of the UH-34 like Spiderman. Then he tells me to "get in, sit down, and shut up, and hold on. Really? He was like a kid in the candy store!"

his initial flight in the UH-34, he was pleasantly surprised to discover that he had flown this exact aircraft in Vietnam. His first flight in YN-19 occurred on 6 October 1966, from the USS *Iwo Jima*, and he recorded ten more flights throughout the following year. Delivered to the Marine Corps on 28 October 1963, YN-19 operated in Vietnam from June 1963 to June 1969. During this time, it flew with numerous units and participated in Marine Task Unit 79.3.5, known as Operation Shufly.

Mad Mex was incredibly impressed by the hours of planning and preparation it took to make this event happen. He remarked, "these men [the aircrew] spent days prettying up YN-19 to near showroom condition. In fact, I don't think that it ever looked this good, not even when it was new. They not only greased each of the 84

YN-19 is slated to be delivered and dedicated to the National Museum of the Marine Corps at Quantico, Virginia, next November. We will keep you posted on this event and how to attend.

Always prepared, Mad Mex brought all of his logbooks to the airport. Even the ones transcribed from cave walls. While looking for

“nipples” on the main rotorhead but they also took great care to make it look like this was its inaugural flight.” He even got a little choked up, saying that this aircraft was one of his first loves and, it was responsible for saving a lot of lives in Vietnam—*“Marines loved to hear us coming!”*

Sifuentes, who had a sh*t eating grin on his face for days to follow, tells Phillip Berler and others how it immediately came flooding right back [even the smells]. He also talked on the forgiveness of the large, fat tires and how important that was if you took a hit or when you were coming in fast to a landing zone. We were all shocked to learn that Mad Mex ever took a hard landing!



From Left to Right Standing: Jim Casey (MCAA Deputy Director), Mike Cross, Walter Zumbo, Ron Hatton, Linda Griffin (MCAA Volunteer), Alen Weiss, Robert Filippi, Ben Cascio, Phillip Berler, Jim Schafer, John Griffin, and Roxanne Kaufman (MCAA Editor)
Kneeling: Mel Deimel and Art Sifuentes