



Skyhawk Association

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NEWSLETTER — NOVEMBER 1995

DOES THIS MAN HAVE THE BEST JOB IN THE WORLD?

By CAPT Zip Rausa, USN(Ret)

(Reprinted, with permission, from *Naval Aviation News*, **October 1977**.)

A lot of people think so. He may not look like Smilin' Jack and he may not suit the preferred image of a test pilot. But Jim Stegman is one. Behind that robust figure and cherubic countenance is a flyer whose log book credentials are abundant indeed. He's accumulated 7,000 hours, most of them in single engine aircraft. Earlier this year he logged his 3,200th A-4 hour.

A former enlisted pilot and Marine Aviator, he left the service in 1947, was recalled in 1952 and left again in 1955 to join Douglas. Except for peak periods during Vietnam when other pilots helped in testing production aircraft, Jim Stegman has flown most of the *Skyhawks* which proliferate around the world today. His job? — wring out the production planes. All he does in fly. He checks every system in each aircraft and puts it through an exhausting series of maneuvers over the southern California desert. Usually two or three flights are required before Jim turns the plane over to a Navy pilot for acceptance flights. On a test hop Jim will drive the A-4 straight up and dive it straight down. He bombs with it, shoots rockets and guns with it, rolls it, loops it, hauls it through every parameter.

He has long since memorized the check profile. "The test procedures haven't really changed that much over the years," he admits. "You pretty much know what's going to happen



Jim Stegman, Douglas Test Pilot, 1955-1980
(Photo courtesy McDonnell Douglas Aircraft)

out there." Nevertheless, Jim Stegman has learned to expect the unexpected. "I never had to get out of one," he states, "but I've had just about every kind of emergency there is."

"Which model is your favorite?" he was asked one day. Without hesitation, he signaled with a head nod toward the A-4KU from which he had just alighted. "With that P-408A engine, she's really a rocket — a sweetheart."



Jim Stegman exudes the youthful zest of a squadron nugget. With a job like his, he'll never get old. He is the butt of some gray-haired humor, though. Returning from a recent flight, ground crewmen facetiously climbed the boarding ladder to help the aging test pilot down from the cockpit. Stegman waved them away with a chuckle as bright as the desert sun.

"Sooner or later there won't be any more A-4s," someone said to Jim Stegman. "What then?"

"I try not to think about that," was his simple and somewhat painful reply.

Ed. Note: Jim Stegman retired from Douglas in 1982 with 3,310 hours of A-4 time in his log book. A Skyhawk Association member, he's still full of energy at age 75, lives in Lancaster, California, enjoys puttering around the house and traveling, and is "trying hard to stay out of work."

FROM THE PRESIDENT

M.D. "Whizzer" White, DDS,
1608 Jimmie Davis Hwy, Bossier City, LA 71112

My "Back to the Future" Delorean journey began on Thursday in Albuquerque. Virgil Jackson flew in from Lubbock. With DC headsets clamped to our ears, we put the Aerostar's wheels in the well and headed for Sparks -- two old buds catching up on news since our last visit while, beneath us, scarred arroyos emptied into flat basins, then rolling foothills and dry lake beds. Soon two old Sierra Hotel "Shrikes" knew we weren't far from our A-4's second home, Fallon. Thirty years ago, turning JP to heat & noise over those hills, we stared across the circle watching for an opening that exposed the other's six for a kill. Lots of OPTAR funds then.

ATC called traffic overhead -- a Navy F-18. We both rubbernecked to "tallyho the bandit," but apparently it was a stealth version of the Hornet, so I went back to folding/unfolding maps and

trying to figure out where we were. Recognized Carson Sink and think I saw Soda Lake, so we assumed Fallon had to be fairly close by. We were handed off to Reno Approach, passed over the ranch known for mustang bareback riding, and made a civilian type trap at Reno-Cannon International. Left some *Skyhawk* Association applications scattered around the lobby of the General Aviation Office and headed for the hotel.

In the lobby an SA member was hollering something about the A-4 Hospitality Suite and our raffle board. Phil "Quickdraw" Slaton and Bob "Boom" Powell had things all arranged, including a well-stocked hospitality suite open for business, raffle board, picture displays, etc.

Friday am, we made a visit to "StrikeU" at NAS Fallon. Cdr. Chuck Sammons, ANA Exec Dir. called Capt. Tim Keating, CO of Strike U, and said to expect some *Skyhawk* Association members early the next morning for a visit. We put out the word the first night, announcing whoever wanted to go to NAS Fallon should muster at 0730 the next morning and bring a car.

Captain Keating met us at the entrance of the Strike Warfare Center and for the next two hours the place was ours. What used to be a West Coast A-4 farm is now something out of a Gene Rodenberry "StarTrek" film. We sat in the dark and watched triangle airplanes fly over stick mountains, then the briefer rotated them for a profile view of the "battlefield." We listened to descriptions of systems only dreamed about in our A-4 days, saw real-time practice mission simulators, and viewed stereo pictures of anywhere in the world as of just a few minutes ago. Almost an overload. High tech for most of us used to watching the Tacan unwind. Keating's Staff are pros -- with pride and desire for us to understand that, while their particular job was critical, they were only part of an overall team effort called Strike Command.

After leaving a little token of appreciation for their "I Love Me" wall, we headed back to Sparks for the luncheon. Boom & Quickdraw had worked their magic -- good for us food and a lot of





ALFA STRIKE? — The detail isn't the best, but the subjects are instantly recognizable to the practiced eye. Naw, it's not really an Alfa Strike. Rather, the 28 Skyhawks pictured were part of a mass fly-over staged at NAS Lemoore in 1972. Can anyone help pinpoint the occasion? (USN photo, courtesy Tailhook Association.).

it. Boom counted 120 in attendance. We paid tribute to departed shipmates with eight bells, then chowed down. After lunch, Harry Gann & Tony Less gave the kind of program each of us wanted -- video tapes of A-4 activity, and of the Blue Angels when they flew the *Skyhawk* and Tony was the Skipper. It was fascinating to watch audience reaction. Whether combat footage, formation flying, or firing Zuni pods at a raked target, every pilot in the room had been there, done that, and every frame brought back memories and private thoughts. In particular, watching Tony during the Blues tape was a treat. When the team was shown in a high "G" maneuver, Tony scrunched down a little in his chair. When #3 was out of position he frowned. But mostly, like the rest of us, he just smiled.

After lunch, we broke for the Hospitality Suite and some business. Member Roger Maino, an attorney and now our VP-General Counsel, has skillfully guided our Association into incorporation and real downtown bylaws. I've asked several of you to serve on the Board or to chair committees for special projects, and I'll hold each one of you to your agreement. We'll be electing one or two directors each year and will need help on committee work in the meantime to make this thing succeed.

We had a ton of fun together in Sparks and the only things left over from our raffle were two aviator license plates, two patches, and my watch. If you're wondering, those female Scooterettes, who pestered you to buy raffle tickets, were Patty "Brat" Magee (Hugh's wife) Patricia Jackson (Jack's). We've renewed their contract for the 1996 AOM.

Everything and everybody will be in place and functioning before the '96 AOM in Pensacola. For that meeting, we'll piggy-back with the ANA-Naval Aviation Museum Foundation get-together, 8-12 May, so mark your calendars. Les Jackson will be in charge of local arrangements, so call him (904-492-1869) if you can be of help. The *Skyhawk* suite will be at the headquarters hotel, and the program will be worth the trip. A bunch more news about the Pensacola meeting will be forthcoming in the Jan-Feb '96 newsletter.

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Back in June, Boom Powell suggested a "Did you fly it?" newsletter item and, for starters, gave the locations of several Hawks & their BuNos. We took the bait and, since then, the thing has grown into a veritable monster. We are reasonably confident that the A-4s whose BuNos

shown in **boldface** on the following list are at the locations specified. The other locations are merely the initial destinations when the Navy relinquished custody. Our sources are in the "reasonably reliable" category, but there are occasional conflicts. For example, A-4B BuNo 141992 is reported to be at the Naval Reserve Center, Staten Island, NY, but we find not record of manufacture of an A-4 with that BuNo. Also, A-4C BuNo 145113 is listed as being at both NAS Kingsville, TX, and the Marine Corps base at Twenty Nine Palms, CA. There's no guarantee as to completeness of the list and we'll welcome additions and/or corrections. Please include the BuNo of the aircraft and source validation (reference document, record, photograph, personal eyeball verification, etc.)

A4D-1/A-4A — 137813, National Museum of Naval Aviation (NMNA), Pensacola, FL; 139947, Rantoul, IL; 139968, U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD; **142219**, New England Air Museum, Windsor Locks, CT; **142226**, Carolinas History Museum, Charlotte, NC; 142227, Southern California Historical Aviation Foundation (location unknown); (**Unkn**), Hickey Park, Lemoore, CA.

A4D-2/A-4B — 142094, NAS Lemoore, CA; 142105, VFW Post 8076, Hartwell, GA; **142106**, NAES, Lakehurst, NJ; **142675**, Lexington Muesum on the Bay, Corpus Christi, TX; **142717**, Court House Square, Beeville, TX; 142741, Ackerman, MS; **142833**, Intrepid Sea-Air Museum, New York City; **142848**, NAPC, Trenton, NJ; **142879**, Command Museum, MCAS El Toro, Cal; **142905**, Aerospace Museum, San Diego, CA; **142928**, Pima Air & Space Museum, Tucson, AZ; **142929**, Lexington Muesum on the Bay, Corpus Christi, TX; 144992, Naval Reserve Center, Staten Island, NY; 145011, Flying Tigers Museum (location unknown); (**Unkn**), NAS Alameda, CA; **145050** (A-4B/P), Argentine Navy Museum, Tigre, Argentina.

A4D-2N/A-4C — 145063, Davis Monthan AFB, Tucson, AZ; **145072**, Science Museum of Virginia, NWC Dahlgren, VA; **145074**, Aerospace and Science Museum, Denver, CO; **145082**,

American Military Heritage Foundation, Metairie, LA; 145113, NAS Kingsville, TX or Marine Corps, 29 Palms, CA; 144135, City of Thief River Falls, MN; 147702, City of Pueblo (state unknown); **147733**, Arkansas Air Museum, Fayetteville, AR; **147767**, Alabama Battleship Memorial Park, Mobile, AL; **147788**, NAS Cecil Field, FL; **147790**, Quonset Air Museum, North Kingston, RI; **148314**, National Air & Space Museum (Smithsonian), Washington, DC; **148490**, Interstate 10 rest stop, Santa Rosa County, FL (East of Pensacola); **148516**, Aerospace Museum, San Diego, CA; 148572, City of Crossville (State unknown); **148592**, Air Museum, St. Petersburg, FL; **148609**, Experimental Aircraft Association, Oshkosh, WI; (**Unkn**), NAS Kingsville, TX.

A4D-2N/A-4C/L — 145122, ROTC, Savannah State College, Savannah, GA; 147708, Kentucky Aviation History Museum, Lexington, KY; 147727, City of Porterville (state unknown); 149516, New Zealand Embassy; 149518, Royal New Zealand Air Force; 149623, Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum, Mt. Pleasant, SC; 149635, Mid-America Air Museum, Liberal, KS; **150586**, MCAS, Yuma, CA; 150598, Industrial Airport, Johnson County (Olathe), KS.

A4D-5/A-4E — 148613, Oriskany Memorial, Oriskany, NY; **149623**, Patriots Point Naval & Maritime Museum, Mt. Pleasant, SC; **149656**, NMNA, Pensacola, FL; 150001, Port of Tillamook Bay, OR; **150033**, NAS Lemoore, CA; **150058**, National Maritime Center, NAS Norfolk, VA; **150076**, NMNA, Pensacola, FL (Blue Angel #1, Displayed as BuNo 154180); **151030**, Pacific Aerospace Museum, Honolulu, HI; **151186**, NAS Oceana, VA; **151194**, Pacific Coast Air Museum, Santa Rosa, CA; **152061**, Hawaiian Historical Aviation Foundation, Miliano Town, HI; **152080**, MCAS Cherry Point, NC; **154217**, NMNA, Pensacola, FL (Blue Angel #4).

A-4F — 154180, Museum of Flight, Seattle, WA; **154200**, Millville AAF Museum, Millville, NJ; **154204**, Command Museum, MCAS El Toro, CA; **154983**, NMNA, Pensacola, FL (Blue Angel #2); **155009**, Empire State Aerosciences Museum, Scotia, NY; **155025**, NAS Miramar, CA; **155027**,



Quonset Air Museum, North Kingston, RI;
155033, NMNA, Pensacola, FL (Blue Angel #3);
155036, Accomack County Airport, VA.

A-4M — 158148, Quonset Air Museum, North Kingston, RI; **158195**, Western Aerospace Museum, Oakland, CA; **158430**, NAS, Joint Reserve Base, Ft. Worth, TX; **159789**, NAS, Joint Reserve Base, Ft. Worth, TX; **160024**, MCAS Cherry Point, NC; **160264**, Command Museum, MCAS El Toro, CA (Last A-4 produced).

TA-4F/OA-4M — 154638, Marine Corps, Iwakuni, Japan.

TA-4J — 158467, Command Museum, MCAS El Toro, CA;

Check your log book and, if you happen to be in the right geographical area, maybe you can drop by and visit an old "friend."

FROM THE SECRETARY

W.F. "Captain Hook" Foster,
770 "F" Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118-2130.

Some administrative announcements:

Many thanks to member Roger Maino, Esq., of Campbell, CA, for his invaluable and expeditious help in getting us incorporated. We now have Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws in place, and good standing with the IRS. (Copies of the Bylaws will be included in the next newsletter for info of all.)

We incorporated in the State of Nevada, principally because of reasonable costs. Our first choice, Delaware, would have been a bit cheaper, but the "*Skyhawk*" name was already on file in the corporate records in that state. No relation to us and, as far as we know, not a competitor.

The *Skyhawk Association* Bylaws require an odd number of Directors, with a minimum of five.

Except for the initial Directors, each Director will serve a three-year term. The initial Directors, appointed in accordance with the Bylaws as part of the organization process, are as follows and will serve terms as indicated:

Wynn F. "Captain Hook" Foster, Coronado, CA, and M. David "Whizzer" White, Bossier City, LA — three year terms expiring in 1998.

Robert R. "Boom" Powell, Virginia Beach, VA, and Jack D. "Puresome" Woodul, Arlington, TX — two year terms expiring in 1997.

F. Hugh "Busy Bee" Magee, Mesa, AZ — one year term expiring in 1996.

Beginning in 1996, Directors (one or two each year) will be elected annually. Director candidates will be nominated by a committee appointed by the President for that purpose, and will be elected by a majority vote of the members present at the annual meeting. Nominations from the floor for election as directors will be accepted at annual meetings. However, for best advance exposure, members desiring consideration for election as director should communicate that desire, in writing, to the President or the Secretary.

The Bylaws provide that Association officers be appointed by the Board of Directors. For the 1996 calendar year, the following officers have been appointed:

M. David "Whizzer" White, President.
Jack D. "Puresome" Woodul, 1st VP.
F. Hugh "Busy Bee" Magee, 2nd VP.
Roger L. Maino, VP-General Counsel.
Wynn F. "Captain Hook" Foster, Secretary.
Robert R. "Boom" Powell, Treasurer.

The official mailing address is: *SKYHAWK ASSOCIATION*, Inc., 770 "F" Avenue, Coronado, CA 92118-2130.

As of press time for this issue, the Association has 389 members, and we are growing each week.



Current members are encouraged to send names and addresses of prospective members to the Secretary at the above address, so that appropriate recruiting pitch may be sent.

FROM THE TREASURER

R.R. "Boom" Powell
5344 Reasor Court, Virginia Beach, VA 23464

The 1995 reunion in Reno was fun but we managed to run slightly in the red (about \$110 down). No panic. We're still solvent, but we'll have to be a bit better organized and implement some pay-as-you-go, "zero budgeting" changes for next year in Pensacola. And, speaking of Pensacola, plan on it now. For anyone who hasn't been to the NavAir Museum in the last five years, it alone is worth the trip.

For information, *Skyhawk* Association annual dues of \$20.00 are due and payable on 1 January

and are delinquent as of 1 March. To get things on an even keel, new members enrolled in September-December 1995 will be carried as paid for 1996. Questions regarding dues status should be directed to the Secretary, who maintains the Association data base.

Payment of dues entitles a member to receive the Association newsletters, a membership roster and periodic updates, announcements of Association activities, and other general membership mailings from time to time. Present plans are to publish the newsletter three or four times a year. "Dues due" announcements will be published in the newsletters as reminders. However, for the time being as an economy measure (since we are an all volunteer organization, both fiscally and manual labor-wise) individual dues billings *will not* be mailed.

A SPECIAL REQUEST: Any member who flew another Douglas product, the F3D/EF-10 *Skyknight*, please contact Ye Treasurer at the above address.

SKYHAWK TRIVIA — SKYHAWK TRIVIA — SKYHAWK TRIVIA

A couple of questions came up recently regarding the letter-number-letter designations of the A-4 series of attack aircraft. One question related to the propriety of use of a dash (hyphen) when writing



SPOTTER Skyhawk — Between 1979 and 1980, twenty-three TA-4Fs were modified to become OA-4Ms, with special avionics, ECM, communications, and navigation gear for the Marine Corps TACA (Tactical Air Coordinator, Airborne) mission requirement. (USN photo, courtesy Tailhook Association.)

Skyhawk model designations, i.e. is the *Skyhawk* an A4 or an A-4? The answer is that use of the dash is proper. Prior to October 1962, the *Skyhawk* designations were A4D-1, A4D-2, A4D-2N, A4D-3 (none of which were built), A4D-4 (ditto), and A4D-5. The initial A, of course, stood for "Attack." The "4D" indicated it was the fourth attack aircraft manufactured by "D" (Douglas Aircraft Co., now McDonnell Douglas). The dash number indicated the numerical sequence within that model — the -2N, for example, being a night/all-weather version of the -2.

Legend has it that current military aircraft designations took root one day in 1962 when then Secretary of Defense, Mr. Robert Strange McNamara, was confused during a discussion of two Navy fighter aircraft, the Douglas F4D *Skyray* and the McDonnell F4H *Phantom*. Mr. McNamara apparently was surprised to discover that the two F4s were not one and the same. Subsequently, in a maneuver that pre-dated the PC era by some 30 years, SecDef promptly issued a decree. Since October 1962, all military aircraft have been identified by the current designation system. For Navy aircraft, the letter indicating the aircraft manufacturer was dropped. As before, the initial letter designated the aircraft mission — A for Attack, F for Fighter, T for Trainer, etc. The dash number represented the numerical sequence within that mission (A-1, A-4, A-6, etc.); and the tail-end-charlie letter represented an alphabetical sub-sequence within the numerical sequence (A-4A, A-4B, A-4C, etc.).

When the 1962 change hit the Navy inventory, the old A4D-1 became the A-4A, the A4D-2 became A-4B, the A4D-2N became A-4C, and the A4D-5 became A-4E. The A-4D designation was skipped to avoid confusion with the earlier A4D designation. Manufacture of the A4D-3 was begun but never completed; the A4D-4 was cancelled in the design project stage; and the A4D-6 lost the VAL (light attack) competition to the LTV A-7 *Corsair*. The A-4F came along after the designation change.

Some of the tail-end-charlie letter designations are straight forward, but others get a bit esoteric. The A-4G, similar to the E, was manufactured for the Royal Australian Navy. The A-4H, also similar to the E but modified for land-based operation, went to the Israelis. There was no A-4I and the J designation was used only for the trainer version. The A-4K was manufactured for New Zealand, and the A-4KU version went to Kuwait. The A-4L was a modified version of the C, assigned to the Naval Reserve. The A-4M was specially manufactured for the Marine Corps. Several Ms subsequently went to Israel, as did the A-4N, an uprated version of the M. There was no

A-4O model, probably to avoid confusion with the OA-4M, which was a modified TA-4F (See photo). The A-4P series were remanufactured B models, for sale to Argentina, and the A-4PTMs (Peculiar To Malaysia) were surplus Cs and Ls. The Q and R designations were skipped, and A-4S versions were surplus A-4Bs, remanufactured for Singapore.

Trainer versions were the TA-4E, TA-4F, and TA-4J (USN); TA-4G (Australia); TA-4H (Israel); TA-4K (New Zealand); TA-4KU (Kuwait); TA-4PTM (Malaysia); and TA-4S (Singapore).

Finally, rumor is that there were two (and as far as can be determined, only two) EA-4s, which were modified for ECM work. Info on this one is scarce. Can anyone help?

And, that's probably all the trivia you can stand for one issue. Any more questions?

(Principal Source: *McDonnell Douglas Aircraft Since 1920* by Rene J. Francillon; Naval Institute Press, 1988.)

CHECK LOG BOOK, PART 2

Howard Weekley, Jr., Historian for the Quonset Air Museum (QAM) at the Quonset State Airport (formerly NAS Quonset) in North Kingstown, RI, wrote to us for assistance. In addition to noting that NAS Quonset was the home of the first operational A-4 squadron (the VA-73 *Blue Hawks*), Weekley said his museum now has three *Skyhawks* (See WHERE ARE THEY NOW?, above). The A-4C served with the VA-113 on board USS Enterprise (CVAN-65) in 1966-68; the A-4F served with VA-153, VA-164, NFWS, and VA-43; and the A-4M, the first of that series, was assigned to NATC, NWEF, and PMTC. Weekley wishes to document the history of the QAM *Skyhawks* as accurately as possible and requests that all with A-4 time check their log books. If you flew any of the QAM birds, get in touch with Howard Weekley at P.O. Box 1571, North Kingstown, RI 02852, or by phone at (401) 294-9540.



E-MAIL BUFFS

Are you on-line? If so, send a message to the Secretary (Capt. Hook) and your E-mail address will be recorded in the *Skyhawk* Association data base.

If you want to communicate electronically with the big honchos of the Association, be our guest:

Wynn Foster, CAPTHOOK11@AOL.COM
Hugh Magee, BPMW75A@PRODIGY.COM
Roger Maino, SKYHAWKLAW@AOL.COM
Boom Powell, 76463.2152@COMPUSERVE.COM
Whizzer White, A4PILOT@AOL.COM
Jack Woodul, 70224.604@COMPUSERVE.COM

ATTENTION YARN SPINNERS AND OTHER EGO-TRIPPERS

Wannabe famous? See your name in print? If you have a *Skyhawk* sea story/yarn to tell, snail-mail or E-mail it to Ye Secretary for possible publication in a future issue of the *Skyhawk Newsletter*. Ditto for any *Skyhawk*-related photos worthy of publication (snail-mail only). If you send photos, please remember to include all pertinent data (names, place, date, circumstances, squadron ID, etc.) but *please don't write it on the back of photos with a ball point pen*. (Felt tips are OK.) Source credit will be given and photos will be returned if requested.

SKYHAWK ASSOCIATION, INC

Wynn Foster, Secretary
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