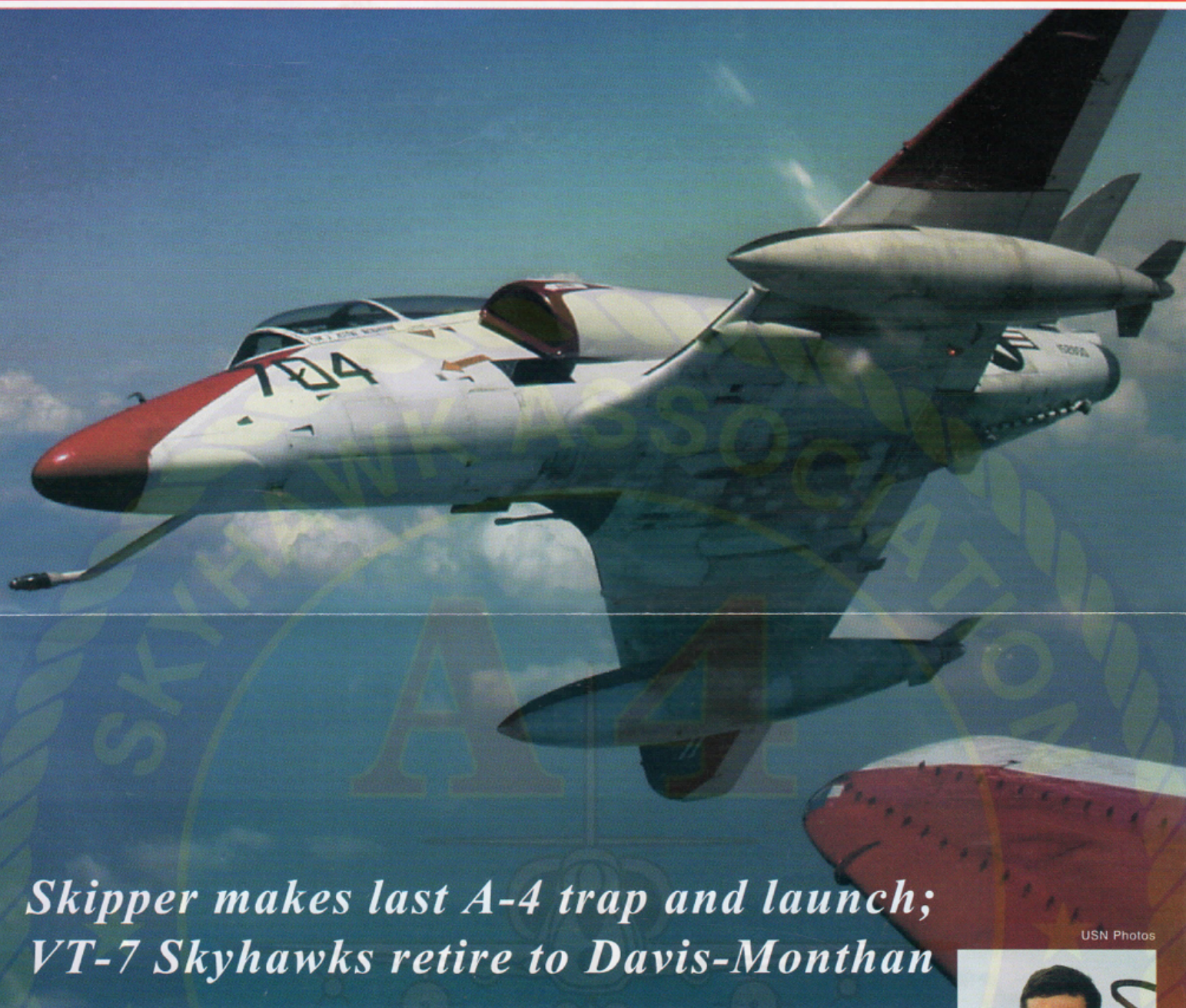




Skipper makes last A-4 trap and launch; VT-7 Skyhawks retire to Davis-Monthan

USN Photos

Exclusive Skyhawk News Report

By LCDR Chris "PeeWee" Herman,
and LCDR Tom "Trash" Cann

30 September 1999. Piloting Eagle 701 from the deck of USS George Washington (CVN-73), VT-7 Commanding Officer Jim "Spot" Galanie made the last arrested landing and the last catapult launch by an A-4 Skyhawk from a U. S. Navy training squadron. The change of command ceremony the following day

at Naval Air Station Meridian, Mississippi marked the official transition to the T-45 Goshawk and the end of the Skyhawk era for VT-7 and Naval Air Training.

The last carrier qualification for VT-7 began with the fly-off of five Skyhawks from NAS Meridian to NAS Jacksonville, Florida. With only one student remaining in the squadron, we knew the detachment would be over quickly.

See LAST CQ on page 4



CDR Galanie

Douglas A-4 Skyhawk



This will be a short note from "da Whiz". Jim's newsletter has more neat stuff than all of my rambling put together and is more deserving of your attention. Just a couple of words about the Retirement Weekend in Pensacola - awesome... incredible!

It's time for the Once Upon A Skyhawk 1954 - 1999 collection of tales to take center stage. In his keynote address in Pensacola, Stan Arthur charged us to keep the A-4's Forever spirit alive not just for us who served with her, but for those who come after as a baseline standard of excellence. The stories can be divided into as many sections

as necessary to tell her story and encourage folks to send them in. From design to flight test, carrier ops, RAG, weather, combat, funny, brave, scary and end with the retirement. We'll take as much time as needed to complete the book, but let's shoot for a two-year deadline. If any of you want to help with this just call, email or drop a note to let us know. We'll even give T. R. Swartz a chance to tell his MiG story in his own words before we tell our version as if one of us had been there instead of him! (See



the photo of a replica of his Skyhawk on page 3.)

The 6th Annual meeting of our Skyhawk Association (or is it the 7th?) will be in Reno. Open for suggestions on the program this year. How about inviting the new USMC Lt.COL on JAG to be our special guest? Did'ja know a couple of SA folks are involved with that show?

The mid-year Board of Directors meeting will be in Tucson. Everybody who wants to come is welcome. Part of the weekend will be a tour of the Boneyard. Might one of the Scooters follow one of us home? (Check the web site for details as they become available.)

If any of you have something you would like see our Association do...let somebody know! We have a ton of member email addresses you can use to pass suggestions along. If you have just gotten a computer and now have an email address, let Capt. Hook (SkyhawkAsn@aol.com), me (a4pilot@aol.com), Newsletter Editor, Jim Ritchie (a4news@aol.com) or any other you see on the Newsletter or web site know. In case you're wondering, we're aiming to for a roster of 1000 real live dues paying members by the Reno meeting.

Jim Ritchie and Bud Southworth get a lot of requests for A-4 gear. While we're not eBay nor Amazon.com there is a section on the web site for getting neat stuff. If you have an item you want listed, visit the web site's "Gedunk" store and let Bud know. Jim Ritchie is thinking about putting a classified section in the newsletter and maybe even display ads from members. The nominal fees would offset some of the things he wants to do to improve the newsletter format, like printing more pages in full color.

The final winging ceremony was bittersweet. John "Pigmy" Pagnalli did a superb job bringing down the curtain on the Skyhawk era in Meridian. Jim Bob Moriarty covered the Marine side with humor and a challenge to the new wingies to maintain a consistent strain on the blue and gold line that ties together elements of naval aviation. I just watched and when it was my turn said, "yeah, what they said!" Whether or not they understood what Pigmy was trying to get across wasn't the question. What we hoped we were able to pass along during this whole 3 or 4 year "adoption" period with VT-7 is what is expected of them. We used the experience of those who went before the Skyhawk generation. This crop of Naval and Marine Aviators will use lessons by us and they will pass along the lore and lessons they experienced. Our contribution can be summed up in a single phrase - A-4s FOREVER...and it's good.

Remember to get your Pokemon stuff before it's all gone. Nobody wants to be remembered as a bad Pepaw. Oh, and take your checkbook!

"Whizzer"

Bravo Zulu

A big Bravo Zulu, and special thanks to LCDR Chris "PeeWee" Herman of VT-7. He's the chap that put together the souvenir program and that terrific tribute video at Pensacola, and he's been invaluable in assisting our representatives that attended winging ceremonies. We are especially grateful for the many photos he provided the Skyhawk News for the special Retirement Section in the Summer issue, and for the article and photos in this issue. But most of all, we offer our warmest congratulations to him and his lovely and gracious bride, Grace Stoddard of Tampa, on their November 13th wedding.



LCDR Herman

A Skyhawk instructor at NAS Meridian since June 1997, he will soon transfer to VT-9 to instruct in the T-2.

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Skyhawk News

S. A. R. (Search And Reunite)

By Tom Brown

Jeffrey W. Saavedra is the son of POW/MIA CDR Robert Saavedra who was shot down in his A-4E on 28 April 1968 while deployed aboard USS Kitty Hawk. If you have info about his dad or anyone who knew him, contact Jeffrey directly at: hilbiles@nemr.net

VC-8 Skyhawk Status

By Wynn Foster

Message Board

The extended use of TA-4s by VC-8 at the Naval Station, Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico, for continued "support mission" services to the fleet, was recently approved by OpNav's N-88. The extension was qualified, however, by the phrase "as long as it is economically feasible." The parameters of economic feasibility were not defined.

Currently, no replacements are planned for the VC-8 Skyhawks, although flyable TA-4s, recently retired from VT-7 at NAS Meridian, MS, are available through the AMARC (Aerospace Maintenance and Regeneration Center) at Davis-Monthan AFB, Tucson, AZ.

Unlike VT-7, where aircraft maintenance was handled under contract by a civilian firm, VC-8 conducts its own organizational and intermediate aircraft maintenance. The current parts and equipment supply chain for the TA-4 is reported as "healthy and supportive."

A-4B Restoration Project

The A-4B Restoration Project of Joliet, Illinois, is restoring an A-4B Skyhawk to flying condition. Bill Wetstein, a war bird restoration veteran and professor of aviation technology at Lewis University, is leading the effort. Once the restoration is complete, the group plans to represent the Viet Nam era at air shows by allowing former Skyhawk pilots to fly the aircraft.

The group needs to raise \$150,000 to \$200,000 for tools, workshop space, parts, and labor. They also desperately need volunteers to work on the airplane.

Contributions may be sent to:

A-4 Restoration Project
23915 West Aero Court
Plainfield, IL 60544

For further info about volunteering and/or flying the Skyhawk, contact Jennifer Baehr at: 815-532-6210, Fax: 815-741-1708, or email at: blackcat71@juno.com

Visit their web site at: www.a4bskyhawk.com



MiG Killer. A very accurate replica of T. R. Swartz's A-4C on the Wittman Field ramp, Oshkosh, WI, August 10, 1999. What purports to be A-4C 148609 is actually A-4B 142112. Originally owned by the Combat Jets Flying Museum of Houston, TX, it was flown on the air show circuit for several years before being donated to the Experimental Aircraft Association (with other Combat Jets aircraft) around 1994. It appears to be maintained in flying condition.

Text and photo by Frank J. Mirande

Skyhawk NEWS

Back Issues

A limited number of copies of the Summer 1999 edition, which includes the special Skyhawk Retirement pull-out section, are available by mail for \$2.50 each, post paid. Make checks payable to Skyhawk Association.

Write to us

We actively seek members' contributions of news, photos, historical data, anecdotes, TINS tales, opinions about the Skyhawk Association, and other items of interest. Content may be edited to accommodate space limitations.

Send correspondence, material for publication, and orders for back issues to:

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Launched into history



The legendary Douglas A-4 Skyhawk launched into history from the deck of USS George Washington (CVN-73) on 30 September 1999. Piloting Eagle 701, VT-7 Commanding Officer, CDR James "Spot" Galanie had the honor of making the last arrested landing and catapult launch of a USN Skyhawk.



LCDR "Ben" Herr took this photo from the back seat of 701 as the VT-7 maintenance crew proudly saluted farewell to the Skyhawk.



USS George Washington (CVN-73)

Last CQ *Continued from page 1*

Five Lead-Safe instructor pilots, Commanding Officer CDR Jim "Spot" Galanie, LCDR Tom "Trash" Cann, LCDR Ron "Spaz" Geyer, LCDR Chris "PeeWee" Herman, LCDR Rick "Ben" Herr, and LSO LT Steve "Angus" MacAulay accompanied student LT Jose "Tucho" Alvarenga.

On Wednesday, 29 September, 4 jets were launched to the ship. A student requires 10 traps to qualify but may only complete 6 per day as set out in CNATRA guidelines. Therefore, after 6 traps on Wednesday three of the jets were stuffed overnight on board the GW. Bright and early Thursday morning, Tucho completed his last 4 traps and became the last student pilot to qualify in the A-4 Skyhawk with the US Navy. However, bragging rights go to

Skipper Galanie as he trapped 701 for the last time and was escorted to the catapult for the last ever cat-shot by a US Navy A-4 Skyhawk. In the skipper's back seat was reservist LCDR "Ben" Herr. They approached the catapult and the aircraft was put into tension for the last time. Skipper Galanie wiped out the controls and snapped a sharp salute. As he looked toward the shooter, he saw the entire maintenance crew lined up and standing proud, offering a farewell salute. With a press of a button, the legendary Douglas A-4 Skyhawk catapulted into history.

Back at NAS Meridian the next morning, Spot handed over the reins of VT-7 to a new Skipper, CDR Brian "Nubes" Neunaber. Spot then headed to Norfolk for ship-driver school in preparation for his new job as Mini Boss on USS Eisenhower (CV-69).

Skyhawks depart NAS Meridian



Clockwise from top: The last four VT-7 Skyhawks fly over the main gate at NAS Meridian on their way to Davis-Monthan AFB. The A-4s made a scenic circuit over the Grand Canyon, Hoover Dam, the Las Vegas strip, and Picacho Peak near El Centro. **Below, (l-r)** LCDR Richard "Ben" Herr, (RESDET 182); LCDR Chris "PeeWee" Herman, LCDR Tom "Trash" Cann, LT Steve "Angus" Macaulay; and LT Jesse "Sly" Fox (VT-7) break out the cigars after arriving at AMARC.

USN Photos



After the change of command, only six aircraft remained at Meridian awaiting the last flight to their final resting-places. Five of the Skyhawks were flown to the "boneyard" at Davis-Monthan AFB. On 5 October a 4-plane diamond and photo bird stinger launched from NAS Meridian on a memorable journey. After a flyby of the tower and main street of the Base one jet headed directly to Davis Monthan and the other four piloted by LCDR "Trash" Cann, LCDR "PeeWee" Herman, LT "Sly" Fox, and LT "Angus" Macaulay too the scenic route west. The four-plane took the A-4 out of service in style. A photo-x over the Grand Canyon,



Hoover Dam, the Las Vegas Strip, and Picacho Peak near El Centro California marked the A-4s farewell tour. After landing at Davis-Monthan and a formation taxi into the gates of AMARC the Scooters were shut down and the cigars came out.

On 20 October 1999, reservist CDR Eric "Gordo" Gerdes flew NAS Meridian's last Skyhawk to Marquette, Michigan. It will continue to serve in aviation training as a static display at the Northern Michigan University school of aviation.

Skyhawks are now only a memory at NAS Meridian.

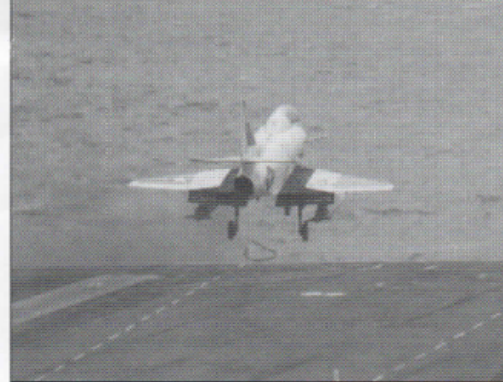
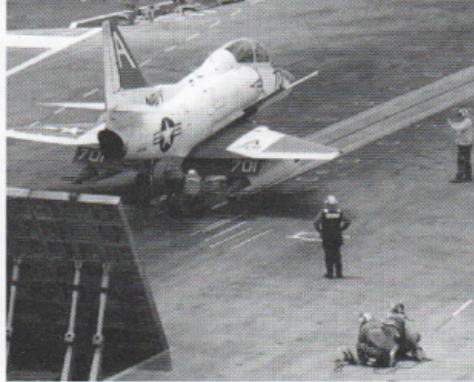


Photo-x



THE LAST OF THE SCOOTER DRIVERS CARRIER QUALIFY aboard USS George Washington (CVN-73), August, 1999. SA Director, "Jim-Bob" Moriarty (left) was aboard and documented the occasion. **Top left:** 702 puts on the feed basket. **Top center:** Deck hands prepare 701 for launch. **Top right:** 704 launches from the port cat. **Far right:** 701 traps. **Above, L-R:** The Aircraft Handler, GW Skipper, and Pri-Fly monitor flight ops. **Right:** One of the many deck hands that make it all possible.

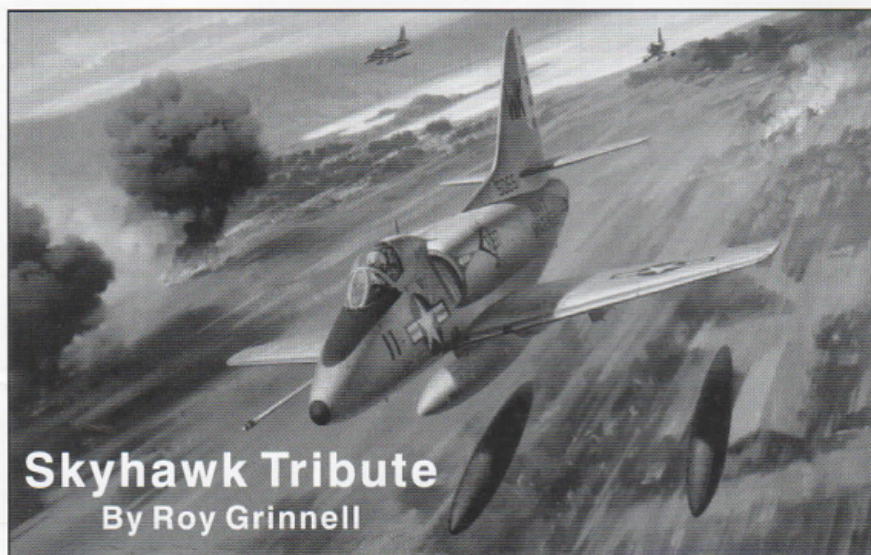
Photos by "Jim-Bob" Moriarty



END OF THE LINE. The last of the VT-7 Skyhawks await preparation for storage at Davis-Monthan AFB in Tucson, Arizona (left) along with 748 (bottom left). They will have plenty of company when they join their sisters (below left, right). The A-4s arrived at AMARC looking as they did at Meridian, complete with pilot names, as is evidenced (far left) by "Spot" Galanie's 701.

Bone yard photos by SA member, Bob Duerden





Skyhawk Tribute

By Roy Grinnell

This fine art lithograph, which measures 25" x 32" overall, is reproduced from an original oil painting by Roy Grinnell. Each print is signed and numbered by the artist and is also autographed by twenty-three U. S. Navy and U. S. Marine Corps aviators who flew the legendary Douglas A-4 Skyhawk. Only the highest quality fade-resistant inks and the finest grade archival paper have been used. All means of reproduction, including the printing plates have been destroyed. This is a single, limited-edition of 850 prints.

Comparable aviation art prints with only the artist's signature or with one or two autographs command prices ranging from three hundred to more than one thousand dollars. This is a truly exceptional piece of collectible fine art, and sells in galleries for two hundred fifty to three hundred dollars. Skyhawk Association members may purchase these prints at a special discount price of two hundred dollars plus shipping and insurance.

Please note: The Skyhawk Association acts only as agent for these prints. Proceeds will be divided between the National Museum of Naval Aviation Foundation, the Naval Historical Society Foundation and the Tailhook Foundation.

Skyhawk Tribute Signatures

Everett Alvarez	Jay Hubbard
Stan Arthur	Otto Krueger
Charles "Pete" Conrad	Tony Less
"Zeke" Cormier	Jack Lousma (Depicted in his Skyhawk.)
Al Crebo	Bob Lutz
Randy "Duke" Cunningham	Wes McDonald
Wynn Foster	Tom Miller
R. Byron Fuller	Bob Rahn
Harry Gann	T. R. Swartz
Paul Gallanti	Dave "Whizzer" White
Rich Hearney	"Youthly Puresome"
Jim Holloway	Jack Woodul

Owners of these highly desirable and collectible fine art prints will not only have an investment that will surely increase in value over the years, but they will also invest in the National Museum of Naval Aviation Foundation, the Naval Historical Foundation and the Tailhook Foundation.

Prints are \$200.00 each plus \$35 insured UPS ground. Inquire for shipping & insurance rates for more than one print.

Send check or money order to:

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E-mail inquiries to: JayCeeR@aol.com

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Farewell, old friends

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