

Kiwi Skyhawks 6-0 vs MiGs in ACM

RNZAF 75 Squadron proves mettle in multinational exercise



In September of 1999 Royal New Zealand Air Force No. 75 Squadron participated in the annual KAKADU exercise at Darwin, Australia along with forces from Australia, Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia and Papua New Guinea. RNZAF Skyhawks, flew with/against Singaporean A-4s and Australian F-111s and F/A-18s.

Having become familiar with each other's tactics over the years, the Kiwis have developed measures to overcome the Australian Hornets' superior avionics and weapons, and vice versa, turning the exercise into a high speed "chess game." Though the Hornets and their new AMRAAM missiles are difficult to counter, the skilled Kiwi pilots take advantage of the Skyhawk's small size and maneuverability to prove quite troublesome to the Aussies.

After leaving Darwin, it was off to the MALAY-KIWI exercise out of Kuantan, Malaysia. Here the Skyhawks faced their real test in one-on-one and two-on-two air combat sorties pitted against Malaysian Hawk 100s and 200s, and MiG 29s.

The MiG 29 Fulcrum, with 36,000 lbs of thrust, 9G capability, and armed with infrared AA-11 Archer air-to-air missiles with helmet mounted sights, provided a daunting foe. With only 9,300 lbs., 6Gs, and its performance and systems suffering in the high Malaysian temperatures and humidity, the Skyhawk was still up to the task, scoring a 6-0 kill ratio vs the MiGs. A testament to the professionalism of the pilots and crew, as well as a fine aircraft. Bravo Zulu!

Counter clockwise from top: Malaysian single seat MiG 29 Fulcrum, 2-seat MiG 29, Hawk 200 at Kuantan, Malaysia

Photos by Don Simms



Orange County approves plan for Skyhawk display

Skyhawk member must raise \$100K for restoration, site construction

Santa Ana, California

Since the closing of MCAS El Toro last summer, Orange County, California has been embroiled in a fierce battle over plans to convert the base to a civilian airport. Dan McCoy fears the memory of the base, its people, and their effect on Orange County will be forgotten amid the bitter controversy.

McCoy is a Santa Ana Police captain and Commander of the Investigations Division. The Skyhawk Association member and private pilot wants to put a memorial in the Civic Center Plaza in downtown Santa Ana.

See El Toro on page 6



The Orange County Hall of Administration in Santa Ana is where Skyhawk Association member Dan McCoy wants to put an A-4 display to commemorate the now closed Marine Corps Air Station El Toro and its people.



I had seen it before. The first time in the movie theatre as part of Movietone Newsreels when I was a kid. I saw it first hand in 1962 from the backseat of a T-2 on a RI Stage cross-country hop out of VT-9. The last time was this past January. We had the Association's mid-year Board meeting in Tucson with a side trip to Davis-Monthan's BONEYARD!

Association business done we met the headman, Herb Swetman who took us on a tour through what can best be described as "acres of memories." While we were most interested in the A-4 section, the fairly recent history of all the service aircraft are set out in orderly rows of anticipation - hoping to be called "just one more time." It will never happen

for most. However, if we can get all our ducks in order, it WILL happen for at least one. We're not talking "Scooter on a stick" but a *FLYING* A-4. We want to follow protocol with this one so we only have to make one pass by the different USN approving authorities. More about that later.

Make a special effort to be in Reno August 17-20 (check the website www.skyhawk.org for updates) for the annual Skyhawk Association luncheon. We will be honoring one of our own, Harry Gann. Harry is making a special effort to be

there so we can stare at him and do the oohh ahhh bit over his photo art! We'll have a couple of surprises that even Harry isn't aware of. Our Association isn't the only one who lays claim to Harry, but we have a special bond with him, as we do with R. G. Smith, did with Bob Rahn, Phil Blum, Ed Heinemann and the others who were part of the conception and birth of our li'l lady.

Others may give him honorary titles (Honorary Naval Aviator, etc.) but the only title we have for Harry is *friend*.

Just a word or two about the Boneyard visit. Almost too many memories. Not enough time, got to go back and listen. Every airplane there has a story to tell about its time on active duty and the pilots who flew them. Some a simple point A to point B existence, others a real Alice In Wonderland rabbit hole experience - complete with Mad Hatter pilots and "Off with their heads" commands from uppity LCDRs.

When the wind is just right you can almost hear the distinctive *wop wop wop* of the Hueys. Maybe on its way to a hot LZ? Huge helos sat silently - in another time using quirky bends in the Red River to navigate to another downed pilot - patiently enduring a colony of wasps building large cardboard nests in the crotch of her main mount struts.

The most depressing sight of the tour was the section of "disarmed" BUFFS. Once part of missions designed to bomb our POW buds home, they now suffer a wingless indignity of disservice. Through no fault of their own, and maybe because they were *too* effective, orders came down that they would be rendered harmless to appease liberal groups demanding unrealistic peace pauses - for the sake of the children? A gigantic guillotine broke their backs, lopped off their heads and broke off their wings at the shoulder. "There... that takes care of that." Not really. While the dismembered hulks bake in the desert, lucky members of their family are still carrying out national policy. The piss ants who drafted the order to cut 'em up have since vanished in the shame of some moral scandal on the front page of the National Enquirer or maybe serving time in a country club setting of a southern federal prison. You wish you could answer the question every one of them seemed to be asking, -- "What did I do wrong?" They/we did nothing wrong. We did our best and perhaps that was too good.

Finally we got to our babies and took a picture of the group standing by side number 701. She still had gas in her tanks from her Meridian trip - just waiting for one of us to give a two-finger turn-up signal. Uh...let's see...wonder what this switch does...it's not that shiny!

"Whizzer"

On the 1MC

By President Dave "Whizzer" White



Phil Blum, Skyhawk Pioneer 1929 - 1999

By M. Davis White
Skyhawk Association Founder

When I first suggested a Skyhawk Association back in 1993 one of the first folks I got a call from was Phil Blum. Our little A-4 community has few heroes outside the Lemoore/Southeast Asia complex but he was one of those individuals.

From an aviation view, Phil Blum, Cal Shoemaker, R. G. Smith, Bob Rahn, Harry Gann, and of course Ed Heinemann, formed the foundation of the inverted pyramid we would build the Skyhawk reputation upon. All us "kids" who would fly our little lady into battle from big boats could fly her without concern about her design and testing program. She was ready when we got her. She was ready to respond when asked because of what Phil Blum demanded of her in her infancy. The legacy of the Skyhawk rests squarely on the shoulders of Ed Heinemann, Phil Blum and that small group of heroes that will live as long as there are ears to hear our tales.

From a personal level, Phil's support and encouragement in the beginning of the Skyhawk Association's formation was what kept me going. When it felt like I was dancing with a bear he would say, "Stay with it, Whiz, she's worth every minute we

give to get this thing going!" I did and now we have members around the world. I wish I had one more day to thank him for what he did in the mid 50's, and for his part in making me whatever positive I may contribute to the scheme of things because of my association with the A-4 and the people who made her a part of so many pilots' rite of passage to manhood.

As Founder and current President of the Skyhawk Association I can honestly say the whole community's thoughts and prayers are with the Blum family.

A-4s FOREVER



Phil Blum at the Douglas El Segundo test facility, September 24, 1958

Keep your profile current

Skyhawk News is mailed via bulk rate, the least expensive (and slowest) service. Bulk is the last to be delivered and is not guaranteed delivery. In other words, its timeliness and delivery is at the discretion (whim?) of the mail carrier. If an address is determined to be "undeliverable" the item is discarded and will not be forwarded or returned to sender. In order ensure delivery to every member, we have requested Address Correction. Unfortunately, that comes at a price. If an addressee has moved, the piece is returned to the sender (1st class postage due) with a corrected address. After the correction is made, the newsletter

must be re-mailed at the 1st class rate, tripling our postage costs. Some newsletters have been

Message Board

returned two or three times, escalating postage costs exponentially.

Member rosters with postal mailing addresses and known email addresses will be published and mailed to each member shortly after 1 April 2000. Recent address corrections should be sent to the Secretary, no later than 30 March 2000.

To reduce expenses and ensure timely delivery of your newsletters and roster, it is extremely important for members to submit any changes in their mailing address and other contact info to the Secretary at:

SkyhawkAsn@aol.com -- or:

P. O. Box 182166, Coronado, CA 92178-2166.

Errata

The photo at the top of page 4 in the Fall '99 issue of Skyhawk News should be credited to Tom Hollis instead of USN.

Trader Jon, 1915-2000

Martin "Trader Jon" Weissman died Friday, February 18, 2000, at Sacred Heart Hospital in Pensacola. He had suffered a disabling stroke in 1997.

Trader was born September 1, 1915, and raised in Brooklyn, New York. He was a U. S. Army paratrooper during World War Two, receiving an honorable discharge after breaking his ankle in his last training jump before scheduled deployment to Europe. From his paratrooper days, he always maintained a love of flying.

The Weissmans came to Pensacola from South Florida in 1953. Martin bought a small tavern in an old building on South Palafox Street, renamed it Trader Jon's, and built a legend.

For 45 years, his familiar presence behind the long oaken bar personally welcomed all patrons with a wink and a smile. He was a staunch supporter of the Pensacola community, the U. S. Navy and Marine Corps, and the Blue Angels' biggest fan. "Bee-yoo-tee-ful." Generations of naval aviators found a warm welcome at Trader Jon's and reciprocated by showering its colorful proprietor with aviation memorabilia, transforming it

Register early for Reno AOM

The Skyhawk Association Annual Organizational Meeting (AOM) will be held in conjunction with the annual Tailhook convention August 17-20 at John Asguga's Nugget Hotel in Reno (Sparks), Nevada. Since the U. S. Navy has restored relations with the Tailhook Association, a large turnout is expected and early registration is suggested. See details at the web site: www.skyhawk.org

Foreign dues increase to \$25 April 1

Postage to foreign addresses is extremely high, in most cases equaling or exceeding the cost of printing each issue of Skyhawk News which is approximately \$2. The Board of Directors has found it necessary to partially offset this cost by increasing dues for all addresses outside the United States (except FPO/AE) from \$20 to \$25 effective 1 April 2000.

Advertising approved

To help defray publishing costs, the Board of Directors has authorized advertising in Skyhawk News. Starting with the next issue (Spring, 2000), display advertising will be published on a trial basis. One-eighth, quarter, half and full page spaces are available. Advertising rates may be obtained by writing to A4News@aol.com or 1220 Windham, Westland, MI 48186. All advertisers must be Skyhawk Association members.

SA patch for renewals expires June 30

Free SA patches will cease to be included with renewals after 30 June 2000. If you've already renewed and received a patch, you may still get another freebie by extending your membership to two, three, four or five years before 30 June. Patches will still be sent to new members, however.

into an aviation shrine. Trader's gradually became a beacon for aviation of all stripes and a unique common experience for everyone who wears the wings of gold.

Viewing and funeral services were held at NAS Pensacola Memorial Chapel on Thursday, February 24th. Burial was at Barrancas National Cemetery on February 25th, followed by a reception at Trader Jon's.

For more on Trader and the status of Trader Jon's, visit www.traderjons.com



Three cities vie for USS Forrestal

The Forrestal Naval Museum, Inc. of Bensalem, PA; USS Forrestal Museum, Inc. of West River (Baltimore), MD; and USS Forrestal Air, Sea, Space Museum, Inc. of Tampa, FL have submitted their respective plans for the 80,000 ton ship to Naval Sea Systems Command (NAVSEA). All are optimistic that their proposals will be approved and continue their plans

until the decision is made later this year. Visit their respective web sites for further information and updates:

Bensalem, PA: www.ussforrestal.org

Baltimore, MD: www.forrestal.org

Tampa, FL: www.forrestaltampa.com

On a related note, NAVSEA has awarded USS New Jersey (BB-62) to Camden, New Jersey. Visit the official Battleship New Jersey site: www.battleshipnj.org

Acres of A-4s

And a mile of memories at AMARC

Bob Duerden photo

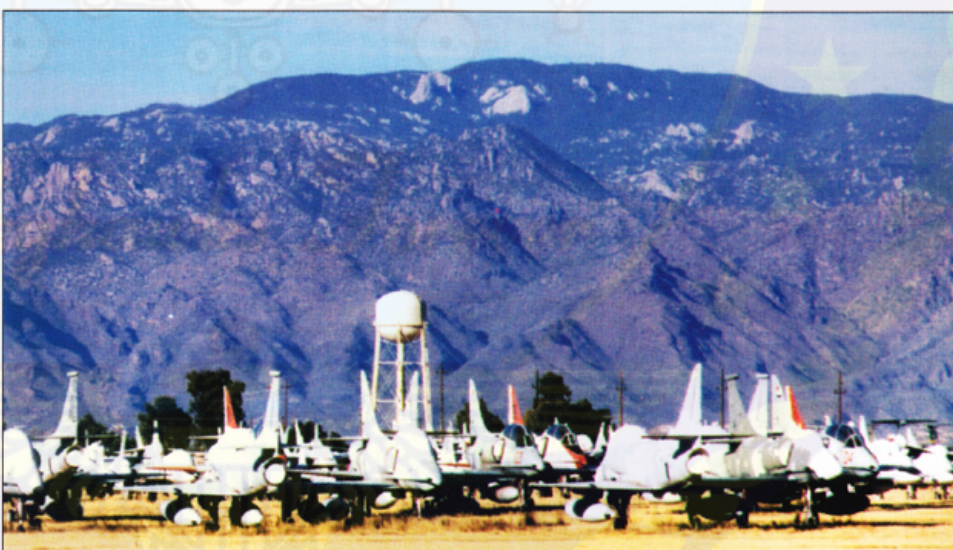


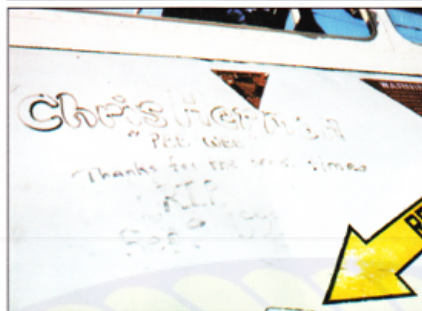
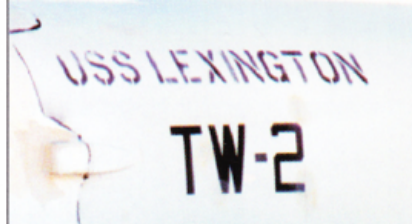
Herb Swetman (left), Director of the Naval Aviation Supply Office at Davis-Monthan AFB Aerospace Maintenance & Regeneration Center (AMARC), gave some SA members visiting Tucson for the winter Board meeting a guided tour of the Boneyard. **Below left** Former VT-7 TA-4J 701 still waits to be prepped for storage. **Below right (L-R):** Bob Duerden, Ted 'Bear' Langworthy, Jim Ritchie, Jack 'Youthful Puresome' Woodul, and SA President & Founder, Dave 'Whizzer' White gather for a "family portrait."



Above: Whiz gets acquainted with an old friend. **Right:** Bear does a pre-flight, proving he's better at climbing A-4s than pecan trees.

Photos by J. C. Ritchie except as noted.

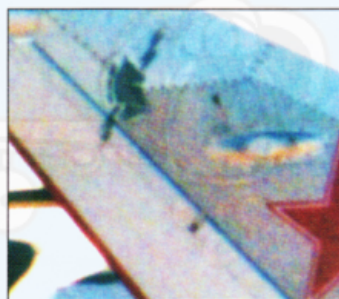




Ghosts abound at AMARC.

Top: Skyhawk veterans of Lexington and Forrestal.

Sentimental farewells on the recently arrived VT-7 Skyhawks are fading fast in Tucson's desert sun. **Above:** The names and date of this bird's last flight. **Above Right:** VT-7 crews bid farewell: "Chris 'Pee Wee' Herman - Thanks for the great times. R.I.P. Sep 9, 1999." **Right:** Partially obliterated and faded, Pee Wee's own farewell to 701: "Thanks for the best 1380 hours... 06 OCT 1999." **Below:** Marine A-4Ms and a Pax River SAR helo.



It isn't known why or how a MiG 17 and a MiG 21 (below L-R) got there. Perhaps the close-up of the tail insignia of the MiG 21 holds a clue?



Skyhawk News Q & A

Q I've been a member for a few years and always enjoy the stories in the newsletter. However, I haven't seen any stories or articles relating to the enlisted side of the A-4 community. There were a lot of us who worked hard to keep them in the air and loved those jets more than the guys that flew them. Any chance of any coverage of the enlisted maintenance guys in the future?

A There's no doubt that the enlisted crews loved their Skyhawks as much as anyone, whether they flew them or not. They are just as much part of Skyhawk legend and history as any "driver." Every pilot I know is keenly aware of the enlisted crew's dedication, and is quick to acknowledge that nothing would have happened without them.

Lots of interesting stories from the enlisted man's view beg to be told. To be sure, our members would enjoy reading how maintenance crews, dealing with short turnarounds, heavy weather, parts shortages, dog-tired from 18 hour days, managed to keep their birds flying.

However, we can't print them until someone passes them along, so if you have a TINS (This Is No S---) Tale or sea story you'd like to share, please set pen to paper or (fingers to keyboard) and fire them off. We actively seek member contributions not only for the newsletter, but for our ongoing effort to collect Scooter Tales for eventual publication in a book. (See Whiz's column on page 2 of the Summer 1999 issue.)

Ed.

Skyhawks in print

The Skyhawks of VC-8 are the subject of an 8-page feature in the Spring 2000 issue of *World Airpower Journal*.

Skyhawk history is chronicled by Rene J Francillon in the January and February issues of the British magazine *AIR International*.



Part one deals with the evolution of the A-4 and its service in the U. S. military. Part two is devoted to its extended life in foreign services. A Kiwi Skyhawk is on the cover of the February issue. If these are not available at your favorite news stand or book store, they can be purchased on line at www.airinternational.com

Build and fly your own Skyhawk with instructions in the February/March issue of *Radio Control JET International*, another British magazine. The featured kit has a 45" wingspan and is almost 5 feet long!

El Toro

Continued from page 1

"For more than fifty years, thousands of people went through that front gate. Many eventually settled here and contributed significantly to the county," he said.

"I started thinking about what the base meant to Orange County, and I thought this would be an appropriate send-off and remembrance," McCoy said. "Santa Ana is the county seat, and we already have a war memorial area for the A-4 display there."

"Millions of people have watched the El Toro air shows, and tens of thousands of Marines and civilians worked there and then settled in nearby cities," McCoy said. "Today everybody knows that El Toro had a Marine Corps base. But will the public know that 20 years from now?"

County supervisors recently approved his plan to honor El Toro and the people that served there with a plaque and an A-4 Skyhawk near the county Hall of Administration in Santa Ana. They have requested a Skyhawk from the U. S. Navy and also said they would help McCoy find a facility, possibly at El Toro, to restore the aircraft once it is acquired.

Though he has never flown one, McCoy's affection for the Skyhawk began with his many visits as a boy to the Douglas Aircraft plant in El Segundo where his father was a Navy inspector. He encountered the Skyhawk again in the Marines from 1969-78. As a Staff Sgt. in MASS-4 he worked with TPQ-10 radar and lots of A-4s.

McCoy has assembled an impressive team of advisors who are former Marines and/or community leaders. Along with Skyhawk Association members Tom Elser and Jay Hubbard, are Elmer Anderson, Enrico Bottier (EAA Warbird SQ-16 Commander), Federal Judge David O. Carter, WW II veteran Jim Cooper (Executive producer KOCE TV), Santa Ana City

Councilman Brett Franklin, retired Judge Ted Millard (whose father was El Toro's first commanding officer), Paul Moreau, Otto Schmidlen, and Eleanor Wilson.

Their plans for the display are equally impressive. It will be located in the grassy area on top of the planter area in the photo. The Skyhawk will be mounted on a concrete pedestal (high enough to be out of reach of graffiti artists) with the gear up and pointed south east in a climbing left turn - heading home in the direction of El Toro.

"It's going to be a beautiful display when we are done. I hope to be completed in 12 to 18 months. Perhaps if we are lucky we will be able to unveil the project on March 17th, the day El Toro opened, or July 3rd, the day it closed," McCoy said.

Having conquered politics, McCoy now needs to raise \$100,000 to pay for the aircraft and its transportation, restoration, and display construction.

"We need people who are willing to volunteer and help put the finishing touches on the A-4, and that means contractors and architects willing to do in-kind services," he said.

As daunting a task as it may seem, McCoy is enthusiastically optimistic.

"It is getting very exciting as we get closer to getting the Skyhawk. I don't know what model we will end up with, but the real work will start once we have the aircraft. We are also responsible for preparing the site in the Civic Center which will take as much work or more than restoring the A-4. We have a great project team and I know we will be successful."

McCoy can be reached at A4project@aol.com. Donations can be mailed to the Orange County Community Foundation at 2081 Business Center Drive, Suite 100, Irvine, Calif. 92612-1115, in the name of Orange County Marine Corps Memorial Foundation.

Skyhawk NEWS

Published quarterly by the
Skyhawk Association.

Q 2000

Back Issues

A limited number of copies of the Summer and Fall 1999 editions 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, 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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MINUTES Board of Directors Meeting 8 January 2000

Directors Present: M. D. White (President), John Caldas (Vice President), E. E. Laib (Treasurer), T. F. Langworthy, J. R. Moriarty, J. C. Ritchie, and A. D. Southworth. Directors Absent: R. R. Powell and Tom Wondergem. Also present: W. F. Foster (Secretary) and Jack Woodul.

The meeting was called to order at 0835 by President White at the Embassy Suites-Broadway, Tucson, Arizona.

The minutes of the 26 June 1999 Board meeting were approved as distributed.

COMMUNICATIONS AND REPORTS. Secretary Foster reported on calendar 1999 membership statistics. Treasurer Powell reported on the state of corporate finances. Jim Moriarty reported on restoration of an A-4 for use in the air show circuit.

OLD BUSINESS. By consensus, responsibilities for AOM 2000 were agreed to as follows: Advance arrangements coordination - Bear Langworthy, with Ray Alcorn; Exhibit Booth coordination - Jack Woodul; Suite activity coordination - Ernie Laib; Luncheon coordination - Bear Langworthy. It was agreed that the

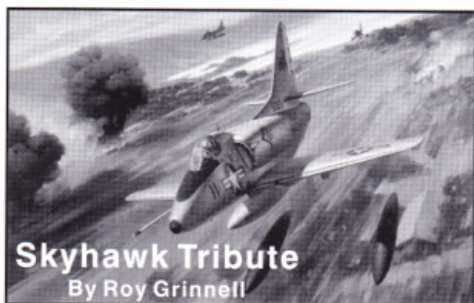
luncheon program would feature special recognition of a member TBD.

NEW BUSINESS. By consensus, it was agreed to continue issuance of an annual member roster, with interim updates for Board members, as requested. By consensus, it was agreed that the 2000 Nominating Committee will consist of Jack Woodul (Chairman), Jim Moriarty, and three members at large selected by the President. Motion adopted authorizing a charge of \$2.50 each for extra copies of the newsletter. Motion adopted authorizing members-only advertising to be included in the newsletter, in accordance with a rate schedule to be developed by J. C. Ritchie. By consensus, it was agreed Jim Moriarty is to investigate Association involvement with the Collings Foundation, and report back to the Board at the next meeting. Motion adopted approving an increase in annual dues for members residing in foreign countries, from \$20 to \$25, effective 1 April 2000. Motion adopted approving the 2000 budget.

By consensus, it was agreed that the next Board meeting will be held on 18 August 2000 at the Nugget Hotel, Sparks, Nevada.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1036.

Wynn F. Foster,
Secretary



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
Al Crebo	(Depicted in his Skyhawk.)
Randy "Duke" Cunningham	Bob Lutz
Wynn Foster	Wes McDonald
R. Byron Fuller	Tom Miller
Harry Gann	Bob Rahn
Paul Gallanti	T. R. Swartz
Rich Hearney	Dave "Whizzer" White
Jim Holloway	"Youthly Puresome"
	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 and insurance rates for more than one print.

Send check or money order to:

Skyhawk Tribute Prints
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Westland, MI 48186-5351

E-mail inquiries to:
JayCeeR@aol.com



WELCOME ABOARD 16 November - 4 March

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Order additional patches

No flight suit/jacket should be without one of these outstanding patches. Additional quantities may be purchased for \$5.00 each (\$6 for non-members) by sending your check or money order (no credit cards yet, sorry) payable to **Skyhawk Association** along with your name, address and membership number (found on your card) to:

Tom Wondergem
4903 Turtle Creek Trail
Oldsmar, FL 34677-1966

(Please send patch orders to this address only.)

Join the Skyhawk Association and get a free patch

One of these outstanding patches will be included with each new or renewal membership from now until 30 June 2000. Join or renew now (or sign up a buddy). Want more than one patch? (Who doesn't?) See ordering info at left. Memberships are **\$20 US & FPO**, and **\$25 Foreign** per year, and may be paid for up to five years in advance in US funds.

YES, Sign me up!

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Credit Card Payments may be made by calling toll-free **877-944-4295** from 8am - 4 pm Pacific time. (This number is for dues payments only and cannot accept patch orders or other Association messages.)

Join by mail: Send payment in US funds to:

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First light, First flight

Photo: Herb Keightley

Royal New Zealand Air Force Skyhawks catch the first light of the first day of the new year. Wing Commander Herb Keightley, No. 75 Squadron Commanding Officer, was accompanied by Flight Lieutenant Tim McClean, FLTLT "BJ" Hollinshead and Flying Officer "Malco" Campbell. The formation of four Skyhawks took off from Ohakea Air Base at 0500 local, climbed to 25,000ft and flew approximately 100NM due east from the coast of New Zealand to position themselves at 180° longitude until sunrise at 0530. They then proceeded to an Auckland beach and flew over "the official dawn millennium" celebration in a tight diamond formation at 200 ft AGL.

Skyhawk NEWS

The Quarterly Journal of the Skyhawk Association

www.skyhawk.org

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