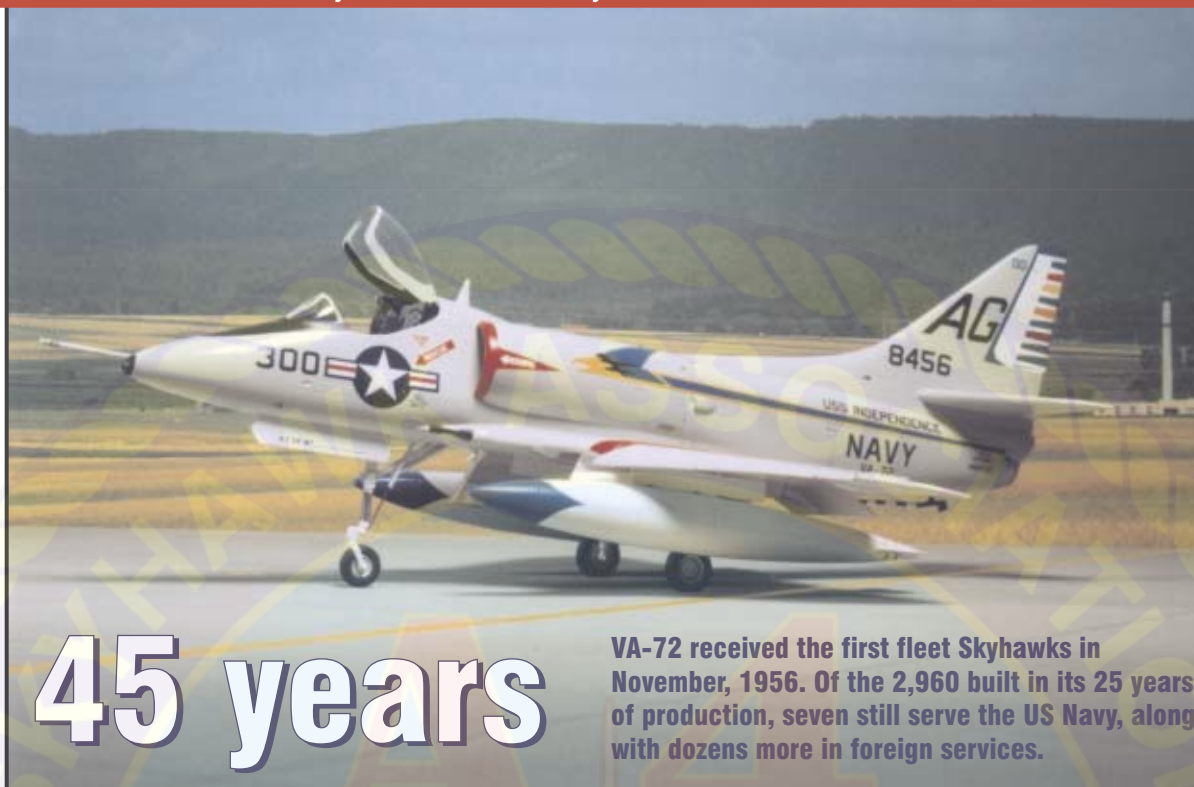




45 years

VA-72 received the first fleet Skyhawks in November, 1956. Of the 2,960 built in its 25 years of production, seven still serve the US Navy, along with dozens more in foreign services.

Walt Fink

VC-8 Skyhawks reign at Strike Fighter Shootout

By LT Jared Allen
VC-8 PAO

On 24 May 2001 the Rampagers of VFA-83 and NAS Oceana hosted the second annual Atlantic Coast Strike Fighter Shoot Out. Designed as a visual dogfighting derby, the format ensured neutral visual engagements with an unknown opponent. The opponent's identity would be revealed upon visual contact with the bandit only seconds prior to engagement.

Ascribing to the old fighter pilot adage "There's no kill like a gun kill," first prize was awarded for the fastest gun kill. Second prize went to the fastest heat seeking missile kill, and 3rd prize was the fastest radar missile kill.

U. S. Navy and U. S. Air Force pilots flew a total of 30 sorties featuring F-14, F-15, F-16, F/A-18, A-4, and A-10 aircraft.

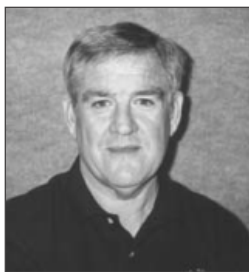
The day's highest honors went to the Redtail's LCDR Kurt Frankenberger who scored an eye watering 23.5 second gun kill against an A-10. The Redtails, however, weren't done yet. LT Greg Detwiler scored the second fastest gun kill with a very impressive 60 second victory over an F/A-18. The Redtail's tremendous



LCDR Kurt Frankenberger stands proudly with his Fighter Shootout Trophy in front of a VC-8 Redtail TA-4J Skyhawk.

success is a testimony to the superior maintenance effort required to keep the 30 year old "Scooters" flying, and is yet another tribute to the legacy of the Navy's last seven A-4 Skyhawks.





On the 1MC

President James "Jim-Bob" Moriarty

My storytelling skills took a big hit on September 11, so I ask your understanding if the following is a little jumbled.

Right now life itself is a little jumbled as we try to make sense of what happened, and sense of what needs to happen next.

While I'm not satisfied that we are or have been on top of our game as a nation, I've felt, as I think most Americans have felt, that we live in a great land, one that makes more

opportunities and possibilities available to the ordinary citizen than any other country on earth. I've also felt safe - safe from most crime, safe from hunger, and safe from abuse by governments or those in power. Perhaps even more important, I felt secure in the belief that my children were safe. Now I'm not nearly so comfortable.

Maybe I shouldn't have felt so safe before. Clearly, there are things we could have done earlier and things we must do now to protect our families, our country, and indeed our way of life. But I remain firm in the belief that despite all of our mistakes as a country and all of our excesses as a people, we still speak as a nation for what is right and just. Liberty and justice for all may remain more an aspiration than a reality in some of our neighborhoods, but even as an ideal it has power. It is an ideal that I fear does not even appear as a passing thought in very

many parts of the world. Certainly not among those who rule Iraq or Afghanistan.

I find it troubling that religion could be used in an attempt to justify knowing, deliberate attacks on innocent and unprepared civilians. What a joke. No, God, no religion, no force for what is truly good and valuable in human conduct justifies such depravity. These actions ought not be thought of as religious acts, but rather as what they really are: the acts of a power hungry megalomaniac, and living proof of the evil that exists within the human spirit. Anyone who would orchestrate such crimes has forfeited all rights to continue to live on this planet with the rest of us. I simply hope that it is one of our members who has the privilege, indeed the honor, of sending this fellow and all his close friends on to their 75 brown-eyed virgins. I hope I'm speaking for the board, but I suspect that if it is one of our members who helps this lunatic along to his out-of-body experience, a lifetime membership, or a case of beer and the thanks of a grateful nation, will promptly follow.

I think it is time for us to ask ourselves, and our active duty members, what we can do for our folks in uniform. I've already started. I've adopted one of our USMC members who sought minor help on a legal matter, and let him know he can't get into trouble that I'm not willing to help him get out of. I'd like to hear ideas from any of you about what we can do for our active duty members. What do they need that we can help with? If you have any thoughts, suggestions, or requests, let me know at jim@moriarty.com and we will see what we can accomplish.

Fly safe, and fight smart.

JB

From the Editor

To be e-fficient, e-mail is e-ssential

While glancing through the latest membership list, I discovered that only about half of Skyhawk Association members are connected to the Internet! Or, it might be more correct to say that only half have opted to provide the secretary an e-mail address in their contact info. I found this to be quite surprising in this age of "connectivity."

If you aren't yet connected to the Internet, you're not just missing out on the convenience of e-mail, but you can't visit the Skyhawk Association's terrific web site (www.skyhawk.org). I liken computers and the Internet to dishwashers and garbage disposals. My mom never had either for most of her life, and when they became widely available and quite inexpensive she said, "Oh, I don't need those." Well, we got her a disposal and dishwasher and it wasn't long before she was saying, "I don't know how I got along without them all those years!" She said the same thing about cable television and the Internet.

E-mail is a fast - and inexpensive - way for us to contact members with reminders that their memberships will soon expire. Sometimes e-mail is the only way we can contact members when the USPS is unable to deliver their copy of Skyhawk News.

E-mail also provides a way to quickly contact the membership *en masse*. Earlier this year I received a request for help from the New Zealand Air Force. They needed to find someone with knowledge and/or experience with flat spin characteristics of T-A4s for an investigation into a crash caused by a flat spin. I passed the word to every member that had an e-mail address

listed in the roster. It was only minutes before the first replies were received. In less than two days, the RNZAF had all the help they could handle.

We understand that some members may have a concern for privacy and are reluctant to make their e-mail addresses available. Be assured that the Skyhawk Association shares that concern and does all it can to maintain strict confidentiality. Our membership list is only available to Association members. It is not shared, sold or made publicly available by any means. We will withhold any contact info from publication in our annual membership list upon request.

Having a current e-mail address on file with the secretary will help ensure uninterrupted delivery of your Skyhawk News, and also enable us to contact you quickly with time sensitive announcements between issues.

If you haven't already done so, please send your e-mail address and/or any changes in your mailing address, phone number, etc., to the SA Secretary at: SkyhawkAsn@aol.com or the old fashioned way via US Mail to:

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

A-4s Forever!
Jim Ritchie, Editor

Iron Mike

Michael D. Trout
1936 - 2001

The first of five children, Michael D. Trout was born in November 27, 1936, at home in Olivet, Kansas. He attended college in Emporia, Kansas, but dropped out to join the Navy with visions of becoming an aviator. After basic training at Great Lakes, Illinois, he was selected to go to Pensacola where he earned his wings of gold.



Choosing to fly Attack Aviation, he reported next to the Replacement Air Group (RAG) VA-125 Rough Raiders to learn to fly the A-4

Skyhawk. In the fleet Mike flew A-4s with the VA-195 Dam Busters, and the VA-93 Blue Blazers. He made four cruises, two of which were Viet Nam combat tours with VA-93.

Early in 1974 Mike was assigned to VA-45. He was Executive Officer for two years, to allow returning Prisoner of War, CDR Leonard Hyatt, to re-enter a normal career pattern as the Blackbird Commanding Officer. In 1976 he became the Blackbirds' 20th Commanding Officer.

On July 1, 1976, Commander, Naval Air Force, Atlantic Fleet charged Mike to develop and provide an Air Combat Maneuvering program for the Atlantic Fleet. This challenge was Mike's meat! Admiral J. L. Holloway III, the Chief of Naval Operations, recognized this, and awarded VA-45 the 1977 Naval Aviation Safety award and Plaque for the most outstanding safety record achieved

among special mission squadrons in the Atlantic Fleet.

Later Mike attended Naval Post Graduate School in Monterey, California. After retiring from the Navy he attended the University of Kansas and earned a degree in business.

Mike moved frequently, living in Kansas, Alabama, Hawaii, and back to Kansas. About seven years ago he was diagnosed with Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS/Lou Gehrig's disease) and returned to Mobile, Alabama where he had kept a house for several years.

When Mike first contacted the Skyhawk Association Web Master in June 1998 to submit information about the squadrons in which he flew, he was paralyzed and bed ridden, and didn't expect to see Christmas. Despite this, Mike became involved with the web site.

Using voice recognition software to operate his computer, Mike collected and organized Skyhawk statistics. Soon after, he took the task of recruiting and organizing Squadron Duty Officers (SDOs) for each of the scores of squadrons that flew the Skyhawk. Statistic and SDO correspondents were unaware of his affliction.

Enduring paralysis, and excruciating pain, he worked on his Skyhawk projects for another two years, repeatedly defying doctors' prognoses. Mike worked diligently on these projects until he was finally no longer able to continue - just five days before he was taken by the disease.

On Sunday, October 21, 2001, "Iron Mike" Trout was *bingoed* to the USS Great Beyond. He survived longer than the average for that disease, and attributed his ability to cope with the continual loss of strength to his survival training. To say that he was a tough man that did not give up easily is an understatement. Would that we had half his fortitude and determination.

We should not mourn Michael D. Trout, but celebrate an exceptional man that led an exemplary life.

He will rest with his comrades in Barrancus National Cemetery at NAS Pensacola.

- Bud Southworth

I am a Military Veteran Locator (and Air Force brat) and I'm trying to locate any information or anyone that might have known Marine pilot Major John H Gallagher, who died in Viet Nam on November 12, 1966. His seven children are interested in learning more about the Dad they lost nearly 35 years ago.

Major Gallagher had moved the family to Savannah, Georgia, where their relatives resided, to live during his year in Vietnam. After his tour was over, his plans were to then move the family to Parris Island, Beaufort, South Carolina, a short distance away from Savannah, where he was to have been stationed. Sadly, this was never to be.

The information we have now is scant. Major Gallagher left for Viet Nam in January 1966. He piloted A-4s and was based in Danang but a couple months before his death, he was situated at Chu Lai, flying then from that air station. One month prior to DROSing, on 12 November 1966, Major Gallagher crashed in his A-4. For whatever reason, he was unable to eject and was killed.

After bringing together hundreds of war veterans, one thing about them is always consistent - they never forget their buddies. If you remember Major Gallagher, whether you were close friends or maybe just met with him over a beer sometime, I'd appreciate hearing from you. It is my hope to give Major Gallagher's children and grandchildren a link to his fellow Marine soldiers who knew him when.

Thank you for your military service.

Sincerely,
Patricia Johnson
287 Cushing Dr
Savannah, GA 31406

912-353-6077 Peachy353@AOL.com

Mail Call



Demise of RNZAF Skyhawks to be challenged in High Court



Citizen group seeks injunction to halt dismantling of air combat forces and layoffs

New Zealand



It was announced in May that all of the RNZAF air combat forces would be dismantled by the end of 2001 and more than 700 jobs would be lost. It looked like New Zealand would be left with no air defense capability.

But after reflecting on the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington in September, a small group of New Zealand citizens decided that someone needed to try to prevent the demise of the Kiwi air force. So, on the 61st anniversary of the Battle of Britain, they launched the "Save Our Squadrons" Campaign (SOS).

The group - none of whom have military or political connections - like thousands of Kiwis, believe it is unconscionable to leave New Zealand unable to defend itself in the air.

Auckland attorney Clive Bradbury, and businessman Vern Curtis have assumed the duties of convenor and spokesman for the campaign, and members of the group have raised the first \$50,000 of funding out of their own pockets.

"The World changed last Wednesday and the sooner we come to terms with that the better," said Vern Curtis.

"In the years to come, America and its friends, and in particular Australia, will judge us on what we do in the next few weeks. We must begin by showing a real willingness to rework a less selfish defense strategy. The first decision to come from

this process should be a reversal of the decision to disband the Air Defense Squadrons in December."

A recent poll showed that 73% of New Zealand voters oppose disbanding the country's air combat force. More than half of New Zealanders say that party policies on air combat capability will be very important considerations in how they will vote at next year's general election.

The group contends that Defense Minister Mark Burton's order to dismantle the combat air forces was illegal and on October 25th Bradbury announced that SOS would file proceedings in the High Court at Wellington challenging the legality of the Minister of Defense's decision. The National party is supporting their legal action.

If an injunction is granted, it would prevent any further action to disband the air combat forces and delay 145 layoffs announced in October.

Max Bradford, defense spokesman for National defense said the Government has no electoral mandate to cut the squadrons.

"We support the campaign seeking and injunction to prevent the Government from disbanding the Air Force," he said.

The campaign, which Bradbury said would be funded by public contributions, is in its second month and has been receiving about one hundred letters of support a day.

A Defense spokesman said it would be inappropriate for Minister Burton to comment on the pending legal action.

To keep current on the latest developments in the SOS campaign, visit their web site at: www.soscampaign.co.nz

RNZAF Inquiry: Fatigue caused fatal Skyhawk crash

An Air Force inquiry into the Skyhawk crash last February has been completed. The reports says that pilot error caused by stress and fatigue were contributing factors.

Squadron Leader Murray Neilson, 37, was practicing a "plugged barrel roll" in preparation for an air show display at Nowra, Australia. This is a maneuver in which two Skyhawks perform a barrel roll while plugged together simulating in-flight refueling.

"At the apex of the barrel roll the aircraft did not attain the correct roll attitude. This resulted in the axis of the barrel being declined toward the ground. This, combined with the manoeuvre being commenced lower than the pilot had intended, led to there being insufficient height to safely recover from the manoeuvre. Squadron Leader Neilson, in the lead

aircraft, realised something was amiss with the profile late in the manoeuvre and warned his wingman, undoubtedly saving his life. The aircraft disconnected cleanly, and both commenced a pullout. The wingman was just able to pull out of the dive, but at an extremely low level. The lead aircraft was unable to avoid the ground. As far as could be determined, the aircraft was not affected by any technical malfunction, and was under control when it impacted the terrain."

Squadron Leader Neilson was an instructor, a commanding officer and also had a high administrative workload. He had worked 12-hour days and had been suffering a very high level of fatigue for an extended period, according to the report.

Read the official RNZAF press release regarding the inquiry at: <http://www.airforce.mil.nz/hotgen/oldmedia.htm>

A Skyhawk for RNZAF Museum at Ohakea

With the decision to sell the RNZAF Air Combat Force having been made, and the likelihood that none of the Skyhawks will be kept for the RNZAF Museum, a team of determined Ohakea volunteers has set themselves the task of building a "Skyhawk" for the Ohakea Museum. FltSgt Don Simms provides an overview of the project, and recalls his introduction to the Skyhawk as a trainee at Woodbourne over 17 years ago.

**By Flt Sgt Don Simms
No 75 Squadron, RNZAF**



FltSgt Don Simms

The Ohakea Museum Skyhawk project started in 1998, when the museum acquired a Skyhawk front fuselage that had been in storage at Woodbourne for several years. It had been purchased by the RNZAF in 1984 for use as a cockpit mock-up for the Kahu update. The TA-4J had apparently crashed off a USN aircraft carrier into the sea, been recovered, but due to extensive damage, had been written off by the USN.

On its arrival at Woodbourne, my Basic Engineering Course (2/84) was given the task of stripping the fuselage. Being the first "real" aircraft we had been let loose on, we proceeded to dismantle it with much gusto. Unfortunately its dip in the sea had resulted in severe corrosion to many components, and a fair amount of "persuasion" was required to remove some items. The removal of one such item with a hammer and chisel is remembered particularly vividly by those involved. The item in question turned out to be an explosive cartridge that was part of the canopy jettison system (no-one had bothered to check if the cockpit was safe before letting us loose on the aircraft!!). It turned out that several ejection system cartridges were still fitted!! Fortunately an Armourer at No 1RD identified the offending item before serious damage was done to the young AC welding the hammer (the AC in question was later commissioned as an Engineering Officer!!).



Bob Beck (left) and Don Simms (right) strip the forward fuselage of a TA-4J at

After the Project Kahu team finished with the fuselage, it was used for battle damage repair training at Woodbourne, until being scrapped and donated to the Ohakea Museum in 1998.

Museum and Base volunteers carried out a partial restoration of the fuselage, fitted a surplus pre-Kahu nose section and radome, and repainted it in the current Skyhawk colour scheme. A substantially complete pre-Kahu front cockpit was installed from scrapped and obsolete components, and a PC based flight simulator was installed in the rear cockpit. In this configuration the "Skyhawk" went on display in the Ohakea Museum, with deployments to Wellington (Te Papa) in 2000, and Auckland earlier this year for the Royal Easter Show.

In 1999, with the purchase of F-16's "in the bag", and the sale of the current Skyhawk fleet imminent, it was learnt that no Skyhawk was to be retained for the RNZAF Museum. With this in mind, a small group of Ohakea personnel started investigating the possibility of building up a



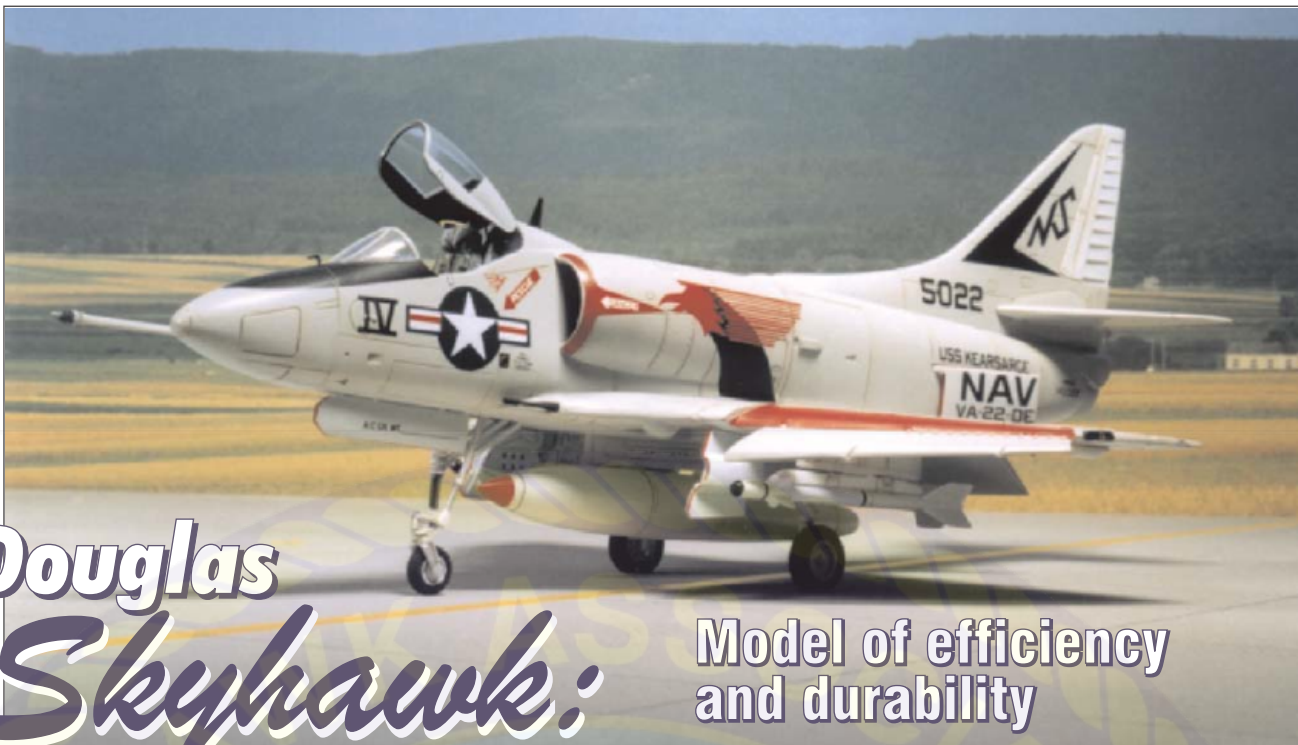
Photos by Don Simms



The museum's display Skyhawk began as a discarded section of a former USN TA-4J in 1984 (top). Years later it was mated to a fin-less aft section by the museum crew (below).



Continued on page 9



Douglas Skyhawk:

Model of efficiency
and durability

An aircraft modeler since age six, Walt Fink talks to Skyhawk News about his life-long passion

Photos by Walt Fink

Skyhawk News: How did you first get interested in model building?

Walt Fink: Well, my Mom and Dad both worked for Bell Aircraft during WW2, building B-29's under license from Boeing. Dad would occasionally bring home a Strombecker or similar solid wood model and I'd hang over his shoulder while he built it. I guess that gave me the bug because I started building my own probably about age 6 or so. That was back in the Mesozoic era when you got several blocks of wood in a kit box with instructions to carve away everything that didn't look like an airplane. I also built flying models but when I went off to college the space crunch in the dorm room wrote *finis* to that facet of airplane modeling. So, I continued with the scale display jobs, which were by then all plastic. In 1967 I discovered that there were hordes of people who liked playing with little plastic toys just like me, and I joined the International Plastic Modelers' Society/USA.

I was editor of the IPMS/USA quarterly magazine for two years, and held some other offices in the organization. There are branches of IPMS all over the globe. In fact, I just attended the IPMS/UK World Modeling Championships last October.

I've loved airplanes since I can remember. Not only did I get to play with the little ones as a hobby, I chose aviation as a career, so I was double lucky, since I got to fly the real ones, too. Once somebody becomes a Wing Nut, I think the bug bites 'em hard and never lets go. I still look up when one goes over the house. I never tired of flying. I got a thrill on every single take-off when I got shoved back into my seat as the power came up...etc.

I've got an ESCAPAC ejection seat in my den (1:1 scale) that I can sit in and make airplane noises. I even have a couple A-4 tailhooks, but since the rest of the parts that go in between is out of my budget, building scale models is the next best thing.

I guess that's the long way around of telling you I've been building models for 55 years.

SN: Is there any particular reason you did these Skyhawks in VA-22 and VA-72 colors?

WF: The main reason I build certain models is for the markings. There wasn't any significance for doing either the VA-22 or VA-72 schemes, just that they were cool. I have, however, completed two other Indy CAG birds from that era to go with the A-4: an A-1 and an A-3. I'm also working on a Demon. Eventually I'd like to do all the CAG planes from the Indy, the Midway, and the Ranger. The Fudd will require some work as there's no kit of it, only a really poor vac-form conversion for the S-2.

SN: These models are outstanding. Have you thought about doing custom building for hire?

WF: I've actually done a couple models for folks in the past, but this, frankly, just isn't my cup of oolong. I build models as my own hobby. When doing something for someone else, you're faced with a deadline, the customer's whims and wishes, and it's a real niche market. Not everyone can afford the price I'd have to charge to make it worth my while.

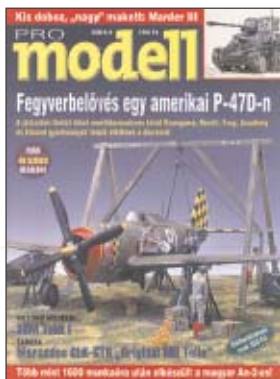
Many, many moons ago I was working on a Banshee and had taken it along on one of my trips (I used to fly for United up until last year when I retired). While sitting at some airport somewhere in the mid-west waiting for trip time, I was in the cabin sanding down some seams and stuff and the Captain came back. He saw what I was doing and his eyes got real big. "That's a Banjo!" he exclaimed, "I used to fly those things." I handed it to him so he could see it and his eyes got wider still. "Damn, there's tiny little seat belts in there....and instruments!"

We got to talking about my hobby and the fact that I was

Continued on next page

Pro Modell

April 2001



Skyhawk Association member Tomas Szorad, sent a copy of the April 2001 issue of *Pro Modell* magazine for review. He works for *Aeromagazin*, but frequently contributes aircraft history articles to this magazine.

This issue features two articles about Skyhawks. The first is written by Szorad in which he chronicles all of the A-4 models with emphasis on the many foreign variations. Color photos illustrate Kuwaiti and Israeli Scooters, and USN birds from VA-305 in fleet colors and two aggressors from VA-126 (NAS Miramar) and VFA-127 (NAS Fallon).

The next article showcases an outstanding Hasagawa model of A-4F (154190), VA-22's CAG bird from USS Bonne Homme Richard. It was built especially for Szorad by a professional model builder. The many closeup photos exhibit how the builder went to painstaking lengths to ensure detail and accuracy.

If you're a Skyhawk fan and/or serious modeler, then this magazine is for you -especially if you can read Hungarian!

Flying Cover Skyhawks in print

- J. C. Ritchie



Above and previous page: The VA-22 A-4B is a 1/72 scale Fujimi kit with Superscale decals. Walt Fink photographed both models in his workshop.



Above and Front Cover: At the time, there was no A-4C kit available, so this 1/72 scale ESCI A-4E kit had to be backdated to a "Charlie" using IPMS/USA conversion parts. The markings are modified Superscale decals.

Continued from page 6

building the kit for a contest when he asked if I could build one for him, with all the little gizmos inside and in his markings, etc. I replied that I *could* but that he probably couldn't afford it. I told him that I'd charge him the price of the kit, paint, decals, etc., and \$8 an hour for labor. He brightened up and said that'd be great, and then asked, "Ah, how long *does* it take you to build one of these?" When I told him somewhere in the neighborhood of 50 - 100 hours to do a real detail job, his enthusiasm dimmed a whole bunch and he said to forget about it.

SN: You've been doing serious modeling for a long time so you're probably pretty knowledgeable about photographing them, too.

WF: Au contraire, Pierre. I've only done tabletop photography like this for about a year. A friend of mine used to take great shots while mine would be pure crap, so I asked him to give me some fam. The result is what you see here. I have done some outdoor shots, but the conditions have to be just right (these models are only about seven inches in length so a good puff of wind can cause disaster) and the A-4 shots were taken in February. Too cold to go outdoors.

My next photo project is to come up with a good representa-

tion of a carrier deck and find a photo backdrop of an open ocean horizon that looks real so I can do CV birds justice and not have to pose them on an airfield diorama.

SN: I've seen some amazingly realistic things done in movies with scale models filmed outdoors.

WF: Movie makers can do some great things with models and with computer animation. My main pet peeve is cinematographers who figure "fairly close is good enough" and an airplane is an airplane is an airplane. I don't know *how* many times I've seen those three SBDs push over and bomb Pearl Harbor. Every documentary has that footage, I think. I credit Elmo Lincoln with the first real effort to come up with some authentic-looking airplanes when he had all the BT-13's and T-6's modified to look like Zekes, Vals, and Kates for "Tora Tora Tora". His efforts to be as accurate as possible gave those airplanes all sorts of new roles and gave us movies like "The Final Countdown" and the TV series "Baa Baa Black Sheep." The stories might've been a little hokey but I always loved to watch those Corsairs anyway.

This insistence of mine on at least trying to be historically correct is one of the reasons my bride hates to watch a war movie or flying movie with me 'cause I keep snorting, "Nawwwwwww....." and "They never did that!"

Reno AOM highlights

The Skyhawk Association Annual Organizational Meeting (AOM), was held August 16-19 in Sparks, Nevada in conjunction with the Tailhook convention.

During the Board of Directors meeting, Jim-Bob Moriarty was reappointed president. Other officers also remain unchanged: John Caldas, Vice President; Ernie Laib, Treasurer; and Wynn Foster, Secretary.



Chuck Wolf

Ernie Laib, Ted Langworthy and Jim Ritchie were re-elected for 3-year terms expiring in 2004. Chuck Wolf was appointed to the Board of Directors to serve the remainder of the term of the late Tom Elser, which expires in 2002.

In other business, the Board decided:

- ▶ To modify the dues structure for foreign addresses outside of North America to \$35 for one year and \$90 for three years to compensate for increased postage rates.
- ▶ To hold its mid-year meeting in Phoenix, Arizona in late January or February, 2002.
- ▶ That the 2002 AOM will be held in conjunction with the Tailhook convention at the Nugget Hotel in Reno (Sparks), Nevada, Sept 5-8, 2002.

Former (Skyhawk) Blue Angels CO Larry "Hoss" Pearson was guest speaker at the annual luncheon. Pearson talked about his company, ATSI, which has several former Israeli Skyhawks, and also discussed his Blue Angels experiences.



AOM luncheon guest speaker Larry "Hoss" Pearson and one of his company's former Israeli Skyhawks.

VA-113 Stingers reunion

A reunion for all VF/VA/VFA-113 "Stingers" personnel will be held April 24-29, 2002 at the Holiday Inn Sunspree (On the Ocean) at Virginia Beach, Virginia. Activities will include the annual air show at NAS Norfolk.

For further details, contact:

Stinger Reunion Committee
2801 N. Brandywine St.
Arlington, VA 22207
(703)532-0559

Or e-mail Carl Cooper at: crcooper@starpower.net

Skyhawk Association Scholarship

Caitlin E. Woolery

Caitlin graduated from Hoover High School in Fresno, California with a 4.16 GPA, and was 15th in her graduating class of 462. An honor roll student, she earned academic excellence awards in chemistry, social science and English. Caitlin placed first in a school-wide writing contest of 2,100 students and has been recognized by Who's Who Among High School Writers for two years. She is the lead attorney on the school's mock trial team and the captain and MVP of the water polo team.



Caitlin volunteers her time to many organizations, including Special Olympics and the Salvation Army. She will attend the University of California, Berkeley, to pursue a degree in law.

Caitlin is the daughter of LT Stephen S. Woolery, USN, a Naval Aviator who flew the A-4 Skyhawk from USS Shangri-La (CVA-38) and USS John F. Kennedy (CVA-67) 1967-1970.

Volunteers needed to assist Skyhawk web master

If you've visited the Skyhawk web site (www.skyhawk.org) you've probably seen the many history pages for the Navy and Marine Skyhawk squadrons. It takes a tremendous amount of time to field the many inquiries and contributions that continually bombard Skyhawk web master, Bud Southworth.

The site has grown so much over the years that it's nearly impossible for one man to do it all, so Bud's looking for a few good men to assist with the squadron pages on the site.

The goal is to have at least one Squadron Duty Officer (SDO) for each squadron. They will be initial contact for SA members and the visiting public that have an interest in individual squadrons. They also will help collect photos and stories to add to the history pages and for possible publication in Skyhawk News. More SDOs means it will be easier for Bud to update the site. They will also be valuable in recruiting new members.

A Squadron Duty Officer Coordinator (SDO-C) is also needed to coordinate and standardize SDO efforts.

For those that have an aptitude for data and statistics, Bud needs a Skyhawk Statistician. The stats man will help compile various Skyhawk stats, such as hours, traps, missions, etc.

Also desperately need are folks proficient in HTML and web publishing to assist in maintaining the site.

If you can help in any capacity, contact Bud Southworth at: skyhawk@cnw.com

Museum (continued from page 5)

near complete Skyhawk from scrapped and unserviceable parts. As well as the already available front fuselage, a scrapped and partially complete rear fuselage was known to be at Woodbourne, along with at least one unserviceable wing.

The rear fuselage in question had been purchased from the USN in 1986 to repair NZ6218, which had been damaged in a roll over accident in Australia in 1985. The ex USN Blue Angles fuselage had been stripped of all the necessary parts to repair NZ6218, including the entire fin assembly, but apart from that, it was externally complete – perfect for the Ohakea project.

When the F-16 purchase was canceled in early 2000, the project went on hold, as the Skyhawk fleet was expected to be in service for several more years. But, when the government announced its decision to scrap and sell the Skyhawks in May this year, the project was restarted. The fin-less aft fuselage and a scrapped wing were transported to Ohakea, along with a number of other scrapped and unserviceable parts from Woodbourne. In July 2001, under the leadership of FltSgt Andy Torr and Sgt Grant Morrow, AMS personnel began the huge task of “assembling” the Skyhawk. The only major part missing is the fin, but a fiberglass replica is currently being constructed by Ohakea S&S personnel, using a mould taken off the tail of another Skyhawk.

The aircraft is to be displayed as “NZ6252” in its pre-Kahu (late 1980’s) configuration and colour scheme. With the co-operation of many personnel at Ohakea and Woodbourne, a large quantity of period Skyhawk related equipment is being assembled to go on display with the aircraft.

The project is expected to be completed before year’s end.

With all of the RNZAF’s “real” Skyhawks going into storage at Woodbourne by mid December, it is possible that “NZ6252” could be the only A-4 left at Ohakea for the Skyhawk retirement party in December. (Sorry - no flypast, but maybe we can arrange a “towpast”!).

Ohakea Museum Director, Peter Calkin says long term plans for the museum include a small aircraft display hangar, which will be used to display the Skyhawk, alongside the museum’s Strikemaster. In the mean time they will be stored in one of the hangars on the base and towed to the Museum as required.

Ohakea’s “NZ6252”, along with Wigram’s “NZ6207” will be a fitting tribute to 32 years of Skyhawk operations, and a poignant reminder of the end of a proud era for the RNZAF.

Reflections of a Rare Bird

By Lester E. Stillwell

A “Hotrod,” Ford, or A-4 by any other name,
In paraphrase is “Skyhawk” and to many is the same.

With due respect to industrial giants,
Idioms, numerals, and men of science.

Genius is that which caused our birth,
And with talent, brought us fame o’er alien earth.

But fame is never earned by hardware cold,
Unless designed and manned by the skilled and bold.
Desinted for real combat, and an eagerness to show...

Together as a team, we bored in high or low.
In close air support, the enemy we’ve shown...
Firepower and payloads heretofore unknown.

SAM strikes, flak suppression we’d undertake,
Our guns spat out a venomous medley,

As Sidewinders, bombs and Zuni’s

Went screaming deadly

Although created to deliver ordnance indefensible,
For versatility in deployment we were indispensable.

Crippled and shaken we’ve left hostile’s shore,
And saw their amazement as we returned for more.
Whether “deck” launch or takeoff from solid ground,
In orbit over target we were most often found.

We’ve withstood the “cat” shot of steam-driven zap,
Compounded by stress of the touchdown and “trap.”

Our endurance and guts brought added acclaim,
As “strike and return” was the game by name.

Our heartiness was hailed by young and old...

The CAGs and MAGs who wore wings of gold.

While Heinemann’s “Hotrod” by some we were called,
“Bantam Ford” or “Scooter” by others we’ve hauled.

But when history describes the might and high,
“Skyhawk” should predominate.. I’ll tell you why.

Like noble birds that rule the sky

We were indomitable and irrepressible,

Which no one can deny.

When all’s said and done, in the belief by some,
We’ve proved good things in small packages come.

What’s more, as age gives way to “phase out”

Trust us not to grumble,

The eternal sky will forever echo

Our “Unforgettable Rumble.”

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We actively seek members’ contributions
of news, photos, historical data, anecdotes,
and other items of interest. Content may be
edited to accommodate space limitations.

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Minutes of Board of Directors Meeting
17 August 2001

Directors Present: James Moriarty (President), John Caldas (Vice President), Ernie Laib (Treasurer), Ted Langworthy, Boom Powell, Bud Southworth, and J.C. Ritchie. **Directors Absent:** Tom Wondergem. Also present: Wynn Foster (Secretary), Otto Krueger (Past President), Chuck Wolf, and Whizzer White.

President Moriarty called the meeting to order at 0830 at the Nugget Hotel, Sparks, NV.

1. **Communications and Reports.** Treasurer Ernie Laib presented a financial report showing the Association net worth of \$30,380.03 as of 13 August 2001. Secretary Wynn Foster reported a membership as of 15 August 2001 as 799 regular, a net gain of three so far for the year, plus three honorary and four complimentary. Motion adopted changing the membership status of Delores Gann, widow of Harry Gann, from complimentary to lifetime honorary. Past President Otto Krueger agreed to oversee the honorary membership program. Director Southworth reported that, for planning purposes, the 2002 web site budget should include \$675 for domain fees, plus DSL costs (to be determined).

2. **Old Business.** Motion adopted modifying the dues schedule as \$30.00 per year or \$75.00 for three years, for a mailing address within the United States, including Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, and \$35.00 per year or \$90.00 for three years elsewhere.

3. **New Business.** Motion adopted appointing Chuck Wolf to fill the unexpired portion of the director term of Tom Elser, deceased, such term to expire in 2002. Proposals regarding the number of directors and director meeting attendance were tabled. Discussion of a scholarship program was postponed until the next Board meeting. Motion adopted increasing the 2001 newsletter budget by \$1,700, from \$8,400 to \$10,100.

4. **MEETINGS.** By consensus, it was agreed that the next Board meeting will be held in Phoenix, AZ, in late January or early February 2002, and that the 2002 annual meeting will be held in Sparks, NV in September 2002, in conjunction with the 2002 Tailhook convention. A subsequent Board meeting was tentatively scheduled for the Washington, DC area, probably in December 2002, in conjunction with the opening of the Smithsonian Institute Dulles Airport aviation annex. Director Powell agreed to act as officer-in-charge of accommodation arrangements for the Phoenix and Washington area meetings.

5. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1025.

Wynn Foster,
Secretary

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Paul F. Collard, Jr -- Griffith, IN
Richard S. Dann -- Webster, TX
Arjen D. Deruyter --
-- The Hague, Netherlands
Daniel W. Dwyer -- Lemoore, CA
Ray E. Eaton -- Springfield, MO
Loran C. Eldred -- Sonoma, CA
George J. Ertlmeier -- Dallas, TX
Ed Felts -- Reidsville, NC
Gerit L. Fenenga -- Nipomo, CA
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Edward W. Knapp, Sr -- Gulfport, MS
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John C. Langan -- Grand Rapids, MI
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Sebastião de Andrade Neto --
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G. E. Russell -- Cashion, OK
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VA-125 Skyhawks pose for a family portrait on 1 May 1968.
L-R: A-4B, A-4C, A-4E, A4-F and TA-4F.

USN via Chuck Wolf

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