

Skyhawk "ready rooms" debut

Each squadron to have its own on-line community

Web site also updated to provide easier navigation and maintenance

Summer time is construction time. And so it has been at the Skyhawk Association. A team of volunteers assembled and led by Dave Weber has been busy these last several months updating the Skyhawk Association web site (www.skyhawk.org).

It had grown so large that it had become extremely difficult to maintain. One of the first things Weber did was reduce the size of the pages so they would load into the browser faster. After the site was reconfigured into more manageable pieces, he divided maintenance responsibilities among several associate webmasters. Now, far more work can be done on the site in less time without anyone being overburdened. Visit the site and see what a fine job Dave and his team are doing.

In addition to the changes in the Skyhawk web site, "ready rooms"

for each Skyhawk squadron are being established on the Internet. These are on-line communities hosted by *Communityzero.com* where members of each squadron can gather to chat in real-time, participate in bulletin board discussions, post photos, files and lists, and keep in touch with shipmates. Go to the Squadron page on the Skyhawk web site and click on the Ready Room link. We currently have 19 squadron ready rooms with 156 members, and a modelers ready room with 24 members.

Squadron ready rooms are open to former squadron members regardless of S.A. status, and are either administered by the Squadron Duty Officer (SDO), Joe Turpen, or Dave Weber.

A Ready Room for the exclusive use of Skyhawk Association members has also been established. E-mail invitations to join were sent out in the middle of August to all members with an e-mail address listed in the member data base. Several dozen were returned as undeliverable by the "mailer-daemon," so if you didn't receive an invitation, you can go directly to www.communityzero.com/skyhawks to join. (NOTE: If you already have a *Communityzero* logon ID, it can be used for all *Communityzero* sites. If you have Internet capability, but have not included your e-mail address in your contact info, please notify the Secretary at SkyhawkAsn@att.net.)

As individuals apply to enter the Skyhawk Ready Room, their request will be checked against the Member Roster to verify that their membership is current. The Secretary will continue the practice of sending up to two post card renewal notices by mail. Those whose renewals have not been received by the Secretary after two notices will be dropped from the Association membership, and their access to the Association site suspended.

The Skyhawk Ready Room is meant to supplement, not replace, the other media presently available to the membership.

All the Ready Rooms have a link to the Skyhawk web site. Since the web site is the only real advertising we do to generate interest in our Association, Dave has striven to make it informative and easy to navigate. None of this would be possible but for the solid foundation that Bud Southworth spent so many years building. And, thanks to the Site Support Team, the many inquiries the Webmaster receives are handled in a professional manner that results in compliments and good will, and new memberships for the Association. Their many contributions to the site's evolution are invaluable.

If you have comments or suggestions, want to help with the Skyhawk web site, or become an SDO for your squadron, e-mail Dave Weber at: darweber@verizon.net

VC-8 maintenance SitRep

Composite Squadron EIGHT (VC-8), based at Naval Station Roosevelt Roads in Ceiba, Puerto Rico, is the Navy's only forward deployed composite squadron. VC-8 supports the Atlantic Fleet by conducting operational and training flights overseas for U. S. and allied forces.

VC-8 flies TA-4J Skyhawks (the only Skyhawks of any kind in any U. S. military service) and UH-3H Sea Kings, the oldest jets and helos in the fleet. Vigorous on-the-job-training, superior maintenance management principles, and extraordinary

See VC-8 on page 3



I was in the middle of writing a column about the upcoming Reno meeting and the next two year's programs and plans which would, as always, be 'socially acceptably' late getting to the editor. I had even started thinking about the post-Reno report when I got the news of Ed "Pinky" Mackellar's death.

On the 1MC



Dave "Whizzer" White
Skyhawk Association Founder

Ed was one of the first to sign up when the idea for an A-4 association was suggested in the Fall of 1993. He was enthusiastic, even insistent, that we not let this idea die. He and Jake Cormier volunteered the San Diego Aerospace Museum for the following year's meeting, including a personal tour of the no-visitor areas. That meant going places where they keep the purists, those folks who can assemble a full-sized Curtis Pusher from dried leaves and cobwebs, and signed the engine panel of the Spirit of St. Louis.

Why write about Ed McKellar in the 1MC column? Because it demonstrates the willingness of our members to close ranks and be a support system for buds lost, the camaraderie it affords, the ties it maintains, and showcases examples for the active duty youngsters of our blue/gold society to take and put to good use.

Every year we are fewer in number, but not in spirit. Some we hear about because of their prominence in civilian life or awards they may have received while on active duty. Others are missed but not identified until some time later when somebody asks, 'where's Jay Ben McKormachtie and Lottie Mae Glotz...haven't seen them at the last two or three get togethers.' This is what A-4's FOREVER is about. Other groups may have taken up the buzz phrase "(Whatever)'s Forever" but we live it.

In the next few issues of Skyhawk News I will be listing programs and projects planned

for the next two years to ensure organizational continuity and Association longevity.

Chuck Wolf has put together a super luncheon program for this year featuring RADM John Boyington, Jr., Chief of Naval Air Training (CNATRA). Anybody else remember "Who's Sinatra?" It was drilled (no pun intended) into me on the grinder who/what is CNATRA (not to be confused with CNABTRA nor Sinatra).

Mark next year's program on your calendar. The theme will be from *Enterprise In Action*, a Wolper documentary from the mid 1960's. It features a west coast attack squadron (still active, and still based in Lemoore) filled with sharp guys who, by the time the film is shown, will be 40 years older. We hope to see most of the principals featured in the film - including the ship's CO, squadron Skippers, pre-POWs and a cast of a some-odd thousand JO's - some fresh out of hack.

But, that's not all. The 50th anniversary of our little lady's first flight is 2004. Bob Rahn put her wheels in the well for the first time on 24 June 1954. A couple of the original test pilots are still around and will be at the 2004 meeting. One note about the location. The meeting is planned for PENSACOLA. We'll be at Tailhook later that year, but for this occasion we're going to PNS. The last test production a/c - side number 812 - is in the museum. That's not all, a surprise guest has been asked to participate. Never you mind who...just mark in *ink* the weekend of 24 June 2004, Pensacola, FL. SCOOTER'S FIRST FLIGHT - sounds like a Charles Schultz/Snoopy adventure.

We need your participation! We need your ideas! We need something for the last two members of the Skyhawk Association's ton-tine to celebrate. Here's a good idea for a first step: Come to the Board Meeting in Reno (Friday 0800). Come with suggestions, orders, threats, bitches or flood the Board with compliments. Just come. It's your organization and together we will make what will be remembered about A-4s FOREVER!

See you in Reno.

"Whizzer"



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NOTICE

The Skyhawk Association has a new Secretary. Terry "Cardinal" Cooney is now the duty scribe and keeper of lists. Therefore, all Skyhawk membership correspondence and other business involving the office of Secretary should be sent to:

Skyhawk Association
421 Clubside Dr.
Beavercreek OH 45432

skyhawkasn@att.net

Members invited to San Antonio for Nimitz Museum tour and winter Board meeting Feb. 20-23

The general membership has always been welcome to attend meetings of the Skyhawk Association Board of Directors. But very few have ever actually attended either the summer or winter meetings. To encourage attendance, the Board will make the winter meeting, which has usually been just a one-day event, into a mini-AOM. With this additional event it is hoped that more members will participate in Skyhawk activities.

The Board's next winter meeting will be February 20-23, 2003 at the historic Crockett Hotel in San Antonio, Texas. The Board invites and encourages members to attend the weekend activities:

Thursday - Evening "welcome" reception at hotel.

Friday - Bus trip to Fredericksburg for lunch and tour of Admiral Nimitz Museum.
- Informal dinner on Riverwalk.

Saturday - Board of Directors meeting.

This will be a great opportunity to visit San Antonio and stay in a beautiful, historic hotel, and for Yankees to come south and "thaw out."

The hotel is behind the Alamo and just two blocks from Riverwalk. Rooms are discounted to \$100 double or single if we can guarantee at least 10 rooms. For further details, contact Bear Langworthy at: flybear@tstar.net

Sidewinder 50th anniversary at China Lake Oct. 31 - Nov 3

Dr. William Burdette McLean, conceived of the heat-seeking missile in the 1940s. He and his team worked on the project at the Naval Ordnance Test Station (NOTS), China Lake, California, through the late 1940s and early 50s. The Sidewinder development received official program status fifty years ago in 1952.

The Naval Air Systems Command (NAVAIR) in China Lake will mark this milestone with a three-day celebration November 1-3, which will include weapons exhibits, tours of Michelson Laboratory, a "welcome" reception hosted by the City of Ridgecrest, a golf tournament hosted by the Naval Air Warfare Center, and Saturday evening's "Salute to Sidewinder" and the China Lakers reunion picnic.

For info about accommodations and obtaining required security clearance forms to attend on-site events visit:

<http://www.nawcwpns.navy.mil/~sidewinder50th>

or e-mail questions to: NWSidewinder50@navair.navy.mil

Special Events

VA-144 Road Runners reunion

Plaza San Antonio, May 9-10, 2003, San Antonio, Texas. Contact Fred Messmer, 524 Hillcrest Ln., Lindenhurst, IL 60046-8920, (847) 356-3247, E-mail at FMES3@aol.com

Is your squadron, ship or unit having a reunion? Send info to A4News@aol.com for publication in Skyhawk News, and to Dave Weber at darweber@gte.net for inclusion in the Skyhawk Bulletin Board on the Skyhawk Association web site (www.skyhawk.org)

VC-8 (continued from page 1)

commitment and leadership at all levels have earned the Redtails the special recognition associated with the Secretary of Defense Maintenance Award.

Here are some of their significant achievements and improvements during the past year:

- Six five-aircraft TA-4J detachments to NAS Oceana, Virginia for training fleet units prior to their deployments to the Mediterranean and the Arabian Gulf. The detachments included Joint Task Force and COMPTUEX exercises for the USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT and USS JOHN F. KENNEDY battle groups, fleet adversary training for deployable squadrons and competitive air combat training with other Atlantic Fleet squadrons. All detachments had an overall 97 percent sortie completion rate.

- A four-aircraft TA-4J detachment to NAS, Key West, Florida for training exercises with Navy and Marine Corps fleet squadrons to qualify pilots for air combat had a 100% sortie completion rate.

- One UH-3H aircraft was received from AMARC, Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Tucson, Arizona. Despite being stored in the desert for six years, it was readied for duty and transported to NAS Roosevelt Roads aboard one of NASA's "Super Guppies" in less than three months.

- The acquisition and development of TA-4J systems lectures, six fully functional TA-4J system training panels, and

a TA-4J motion simulator enabled VC-8 to establish and maintain its own internal "TA-4J FRAMP." Maintenance personnel can now learn to troubleshoot and repair TA-4J's on fully functional visual system simulators.

- TA-4J aircraft were upgraded to carry AST-6 Threat Emitter and ALQ-167 Jamming pods, increasing the command's ability to replicate numerous threat emitters and jammers.

- Six of seven TA-4J aircraft were repainted with new camouflage paint schemes, providing a more realistic dissimilar adversary platform with which to train fleet pilots.

- Funding was approved and received for a resident TA-4J avionics/electrical technical representative via NATEC. The resultant training and experience has increased the reliability of avionics components and systems.

- Upgrading TA-4J engines from J-52P-8B to the J-52P-8C has increased the overhaul interval from 750 hours to 900 hours, which will save the Navy considerable repair costs.

- An engineering change was requested to install a VHF radio switch on the TA-4J aircraft control stick. This will allow the pilot to switch between UHF and VHF without having to take his eyes off of the instrument panels or visual targets while in flight. The change was scheduled for installation in early May.

- All Skyhawks and Sea Kings passed Aircraft Service Period Adjustment inspections, resulting in a one-year extension of all Aircraft Period Ending Dates until the next ASPA inspections.

Skyhawk Log



By Howard C. "Chuck" Wolf

At the bottom of my pullout (about 1,900 ft.) it sounded like the aircraft had been struck with a large sledgehammer, and suddenly my leg felt like it was it was caught in a constantly tightening vise.

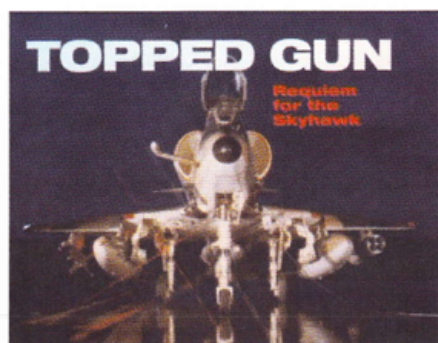


My flight suit was soaked from the blood I was losing. I tightened the strap on my kneeboard to make a tourniquet, and knew then that ejection would be my last choice because of sharks.

There was still one item to take care of. It turned out I had a 1,000 lb. bomb that failed to release during my run. It appeared the best solution was to emergency jettison the rack with the bomb still attached and hope it didn't explode on contact with the water. This caused quite a stir aboard the plane guard destroyer because I did this while turning crosswind!

See LOG on page 6

See LOG on page 6



TOPPED GUN: Requiem for the Skyhawk
By Ross Ewing ISBN 0-473-08560-7



This is about planes, pilots and politics, but best of all it is about the A-4 Skyhawks that so ably served the Royal New Zealand Air Force for more than thirty years.

It begins with a brief history of RNZAF combat aviation and then chronicles in detail the Skyhawk's entry, evolution, and abrupt exit from service at the hands of a 'politically correct' government.

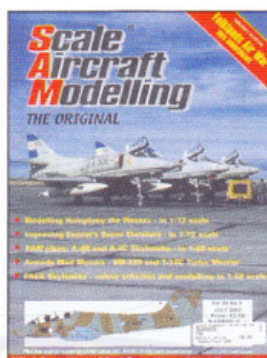


Ewing has been intimately involved with Kiwi Skyhawk history from its exciting and controversial beginning to its sad and controversial end. As such, his writing conveys a first-hand view from the inside in an easy-to-read,

non-technical style. It is an enjoyable and informative book, but, unfortunately, it does not have a happy ending.

Topped Gun is hardbound, 154 pages, and profusely illustrated with black and white and color photographs. It is a bargain at NZ\$ 49.95 (about US\$ 24.00). If you wish to purchase a copy directly from the author, write him at: rewing@iconz.co.nz

-- J. C. Ritchie



The July *Scale Aircraft Modeling* magazine features an article on the Falklands. Needless to say the Skyhawk is highly illustrated in this article. It's even on the cover of the magazine so we do know they have taste. It has color drawings of the paint schemes used, photos and line drawings of the A-4. Also there is an article on how

to convert other kits to build these models of the A-4. All in all a good reference on an export version.

Copies of the magazine can probably be found at the better hobby shops, or go on line to www.Squadron.com. Use their search engine and enter "Scale Aircraft Modeling."

Flying Cover Skyhawks in print

-- Joe Turpen

The September 2002 issue of Smithsonian's *Air and Space* magazine marks the 20th anniversary of the Falklands War in *Remembering the Falklands*, with a lot of Skyhawk action included. While a British victory in the end, it might easily have been a disastrous defeat. The Brits could have lost at least seven more ships had the direct hits of Argentine bombs exploded. Instead, the British-made thousand pounders failed to detonate because fuses didn't arm when the bombs were released at low altitudes. In all, twenty A-4s were reported lost during the conflict. As of 2000, the Argentine Air Force had 54 Skyhawks in their arsenal, some that were on order. Their Navy listed none. Their only carrier, *25th de Mayo*, has been scrapped and it is unlikely that it will be replaced.

For a very short video of some Argentine Skyhawk carrier ops go to: <http://www.fuerzasnavales.com>, then click on "video."



Mail Call

I wanted you to know how much I enjoyed Pat Patrick's beautifully written account of his two flameouts. Such exceptional writing is an especially pleasant surprise in a small publication such as yours. Great stuff!

John Lamers

We always like to know what readers think, and we actively solicit their contributions for publication. Got a, high-pucker Skyhawk Log story, Bravo Zulu, suggestion, or beef?

Send it to A-4News@aol.com, or:

Skyhawk News
1220 Windham
Westland, MI 48186

Web Watch

By Nick Nickerson
Skyhawk News Internet writer

As a new feature in the Skyhawk News, we will present aviation related websites sent in by readers that might be of interest to others. As you surf, jot down the URLs of interesting sites or links encounter. We'll publish the best of them here.

To get you started, you may want to visit:

<http://www.abledogs.com/Stories/Stories.htm>. This site has a collection of TINS tales and sea stories compiled by the Able Dogs, the Skyraider pilots, over the years. Other aircraft are often mentioned, and some of you may recognize the authors and the stories they tell. Then, if you haven't already done so, log on to: <http://www.steehouwer.com/> where, Peter Steehouwer has accumulated over 2000 action pictures.

After landing I couldn't tap the brakes to clear the arresting gear so the Air Boss called out to leave the engine running at idle, and had the plane captains chock the gear. The cherry picker raised corpsman on a pallet up to the cockpit to see if I needed immediate medical attention. I thought the best thing to do at that point was exit the cockpit and get to sickbay. Several plane captains helped me get on the pallet and it was lowered to the flight deck. As they were transferring me to a litter, one of the corpsman said he'd save the bullet for me as a souvenir (I still have it).

Thinking back on it now, my arrival at sick bay was like the M*A*S*H television series, only without all the wisecracks. I was immediately prepped for surgery and was given a strong pain killer. I thought I would pass out but, interestingly, I stayed awake through the entire operation. Next came a spinal where everything below the waist was numbed. Its a very unusual feeling if you've never had this experience.

As I was waiting on the table for the bullet to be removed, one of the corpsmen told me I was in luck. He said LCDR Cagliano (our Flight Surgeon), who would be performing the operation, had just recently completed an advanced course in bone surgery at Harvard Medical School. I doubt if there was anyone more qualified in the U. S. Navy to help me at that time. Had it not been for him, I probably would have lost my leg. (I've tried to locate him and thank him personally but never was able to track him down. If anyone knows his whereabouts, please let me know).

The initial operation was successful. It turned out the bone was shattered more than broken. The Xray picture looked like a spider web. I was allowed to have visitors the next day. The first was one of our senior LCDR's, Frank Pesenti. He said I needed to turn into a laundry bomber - "in by nine, out by five." He had a lot of other good advice such as "you only have so many helicopter rides in your life, don't use 'em all up." LTJG's Steve Hastings and Mike Cronin brought me a birthday cake that said "Wounded Warrior".

The LSO visited and said my pass was an OK-2. I've done worse when I was in full control. Many others showed up but I was still pretty groggy from all the medication and can't recall much after that.

Next was a return trip to the states for follow-up surgery at U.S. Naval Hospital - Oakland, CA. The first leg was a flight on

the COD to Clark AFB, Philippines. They put me in a litter basket again, loaded me on the plane and laid me on the floor between the seats, up near the pilots. Unfortunately, no one secured the litter basket. During the deck launch, the basket slid on the metal floor all the way to the rear. Luckily, my head was to the rear and I didn't jam my leg when it slammed into the aft bulkhead.

I spent a few days at Clark AFB, and then it was on to Japan. Most everything was a blur due to the painkillers they were giving me. I remember waking up as they were loading us on a C-141 hospital flight bound for Travis AFB. There were Red Cross volunteers everywhere giving out milk and cookies. Apparently this was a daily event since it looked like it was a routine exercise for them. The plane had room for about 50 patients using canvas webbing hanging from the bulkheads (somewhat like the sleeping bunks in a destroyer only with a little more room). Eleven hours later, we touched down in California. Oddly, there wasn't much celebration when we did.

Up to now, the treatment I had received was excellent. Sad to say, when I was turned over to the Navy, everything went downhill. The general attitude seemed to be that the patients were an inconvenience that had to be put up with. This was especially hard to take because the U. S. Naval Hospital - Oakland was designated as the facility to treat all war-related bone injuries. This meant that all the young Marines with missing arms and legs due to land mines etc., were sent here for surgery, prosthetics and therapy. The good news was that I got to meet Wynn Foster, aka "Capt. Hook." He and I spent several months together at the hospital trying to recover.

Seeing and thinking of the wounded patients always reminded me of the verse -

I complained of having no shoes until one day I met a man with no feet.

Mike Cronin was shot down later that year and spent the rest of the war as a POW. He is now a Captain with American Airlines living in Virginia. Steve Hastings later went on to test pilot school at Patuxent, and also lives in Virginia.

Then-Ensign Wolf was awarded the DFC. He recovered and made another WESTPAC cruise with VA-23 aboard U.S.S. Ticonderoga (CVA 14) after which he was a flight instructor in VA-125. After his Naval service Wolf was a Delta Airlines pilot. He recently retired and lives in Marietta, GA. - Ed.



Welcome Aboard
20 May - 15 Aug, 2002

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Skyhawk NEWS

Published quarterly by
the Skyhawk Association.
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Back Issues

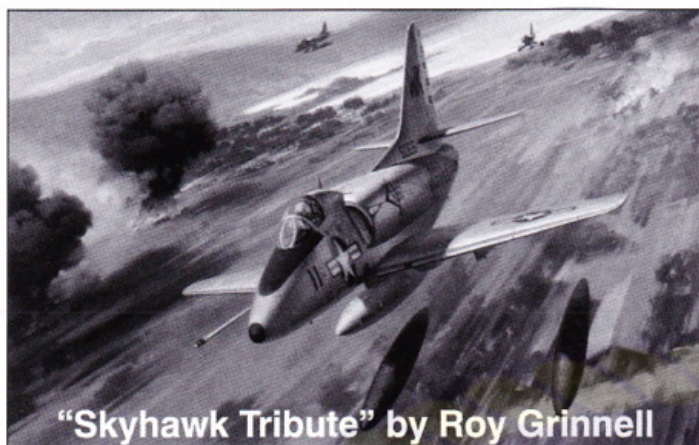
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Write to us

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

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James C. Ritchie, Editor
A4News@aol.com



"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 autographed by 23 USN and USMC aviators who flew the legendary Skyhawk. All means of reproduction, including the printing plates have been destroyed. This is a single, limited-edition of 850 prints.

Proceeds will be divided between the National Museum of Naval Aviation Foundation, the Naval Historical Society Foundation and the Tailhook Educational Foundation.

Prints are \$250.00 each, including

packaging and shipping via insured FedEx 3rd day. Inquire for shipping and insurance rates for more than one print, or for next day air. Please also include your telephone number and e-mail address in your order.

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Skyhawk Patch
6213 Glen Abbey Ln
Bradenton, FL 34202-9265



VA-36 Photo Album

By Ted "Bear" Langworthy

Above left: In the groove to USS Enterprise

Above right: VA-36, 701 with Roadrunner decal for change of command. USS Enterprise, WESTPAC 1966

Below left: VAH-4 A-3 Passing gas to VA-36 A-4

Below right: VA-36 Pilots, USS America, 1967



Skyhawk NEWS

The Quarterly Journal of the Skyhawk Association

www.skyhawk.org

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