

“Man our ship and bring her to life!”



USS Ronald Reagan CVN-76



Marine Brigadier General and Skyhawk legend Jay Hubbard lost a decade long battle against prostate cancer. Jay was friends with the original 'crew' (Ed Heinemann, Harry Gann and R.G Smith) who were responsible for the birth and early care of our beloved Scooter.

On the 1MC



Dave "Whizzer" White
President and Founder

After retirement the group kept in touch by going on camping trips on weekends to not only recharge their friendships but compare TINS about our little lady (some, I'm sure improving with each telling).

Jay was one of the folks who, during my experience with P/C, was there to remind me not only would I not die but also that I was way back in the line for sympathy! Jay never gave into the discomforts of his disease particularly if he was talking to someone who was recently diagnosed with prostate cancer. He could even find humor about his situation. For the last several years Jay's chemo treatment consisted of

taking shots of the female hormone estrogen. When asked about how he was handling the treatment he usually came back with, "Whiz, with this hormone crap I've developed a set of knockers Raquel Welch would be proud to have...and added a cute 'swish' to my walk." I kidded him about his ordering stuff from Victoria Secret rather than looking at the models. I talked to him when he was tired and really hurting from treatment but he never even hinted about giving into the disease. He was always looking to take one more step, give more bit of encouragement to someone he thought was worse off.

Heroes are compared to someone who has had a profound and positive impact on one's life; a dad, a brother, a movie star, a past squadron or ship skipper. To fellow Marines, squadron mates and friends, Jay, fit any description of a hero. He was a Commander in the Marine Corps molded in the guise of a 'Duke' Wayne. Jay was one of those unique Officers who was able to pull the best out of you whether in a bombing run over Khe San or an exercise on the grounds of El Toro. Impressive, aggressive and mission oriented General Hubbard was fair when dealing with young Marine tigers drawing out their best in war and peace.

I think if you are of a mind to one can listen real careful-like and hear the Duke welcoming Jay, "Welcome aboard, Pilgrim, the next round is on me!" I'll miss Jay Hubbard's reassurance but can rest in his example of the best in A-4s FOREVER.

"Whizzer"



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NOTICE

Skyhawk Association Secretary. Terry "Cardinal" Cooney, duty scribe and keeper of lists, has a new e-mail address.

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Since Al Gore set the bar for Vice Presidents by claiming to have invented the Internet, Puresome has resorted to validating his lofty position of SA vice president by claiming to be the first New Mexican crew member for the next Jet Propulsion Laboratory mission to the Sun, having learned the night flying trade in Scooters. Unfortunately, this story has met with little credibility outside of Happiness Hours, where it is usually told. Only an ill-timed trip to the head during the Winter Meeting of the SA Board saved him from inventing another story. The temporarily absent Youthly was unanimously appointed to be the Chairman of the Nominating Committee for three Association Directors whose terms were ending. The so-honored Chairman accepted with grace and vowed that, before future Board Meetings, not to drink so much coffee.

The Spirit of CAPT HOOK, who provided invaluable procedural nit-picking for many years, hovered over Puresome's shoulder as he consulted the Association Bylaws and set up a nominating committee. Board Directors David Weber and Boom Powell, whose terms were expiring, agreed to run again for another term. Board Members Ed Jobin and Bear Langworthy suggested former Marine Bob Hickerson run for the remaining Directorship. When Puresome learned that Bob had flown the Scoot for twenty-six years, he almost nixed the nomination on the basis that he had been so outrageously out-bagged.

COL Hickerson is a Naval Aviator with twenty-eight years of active service in the Marine Corps. Beginning in 1968, he flew the A-4 Charlie, Echo, Foxtrot, Super F, M, T, and OA-4M. e

flew with all Marine A-4 squadrons as an instructor with MAWTUPAC, and was Assistant CAG LSO in CVW-21 on Hancock 1972-1973. He has two advanced college degrees, and currently is employed by Texas Tech University as CEO Hill Country and is Dean of their Junction, Texas campus. He is active in several volunteer organizations as well as community and church activities. The Nominating Committee held its collective breath until Bob enthusiastically accepted his nomination.

Since the Skyhawk Association is an all-volunteer group, its health depends on finding enthusiastic folks that are willing to work. Some functions are so labor-intensive that without help the chaps that do the work burn out. David Webber, our webmaster extraordinaire is in constant need for people with twidget talent.

It is commonly thought that *Skyhawk News* has a staff of dozens, but that is not the case at all. The burden of acquiring, editing and writing most material, along with doing all the layout design and pre-press work has, up to this point, been shouldered by a staff of only one.

Surely, out of more than 800 members that flew and maintained the World's Best Attack Airplane, there must be someone willing to contribute their ideas, talents and skills. TAILHOOK 2003 looks to be attended in outstanding numbers. It is a great opportunity to drop by the booth, say Howdy, and figger out how you can help. We need it.

Puresome Sez



Jack Woodul
Vice President

-- YP--

Candidates for Treasurer sought

If you are interested in serving the Association as Treasurer, please contact Ernie Laib for a briefing about duty requirements at:

ernielai1@cs.com

If after consulting with Ernie you would like to be considered for the position please notify Whizzer White at:

A4pilot@aol.com

Skyhawk News seeks editors, writers, reporters, contributors

Managing editor: Plan, schedule, acquire, and submit material for publication.

Associate editors: Responsible for gathering material for recurring features such as reunion and event notices, book/magazine reviews, or other niche interests, etc.

Contributing writers: Submit on free-lance basis relevant material to managing editor for consideration for publication, i.e., first-hand reports of events, memoirs of your Skyhawk-related service/experiences, etc..

Please notify Whizzer White at:

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Back Issues

A limited number of copies of Skyhawk News are available by mail for \$3.00 each (\$4.00 foreign), 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.

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Mrs. Reagan gave the order to "man our ship and bring her to life!"



"Peace Through Strength"

USS Ronald Reagan CVN-76

Ninth Nimitz-class carrier commissioned





May 1996: Newport News Shipbuilding Chairman and CEO Bill Fricks presented a model of the ship to President and Mrs. Reagan.



Above Left: President George W. Bush was the principal speaker for the christening of the ninth Nimitz-class aircraft carrier, USS Ronald Reagan, at Newport News Shipbuilding in Newport News, Virginia.

Above Right: President George W. Bush and Newport News Shipbuilding Chairman and CEO Bill Fricks look on as Mrs. Ronald Reagan breaks the traditional bottle of champagne against the ship's hull and christens the ship in her husband's name on Sunday, March 4, 2001, the Reagans' 49th wedding anniversary.



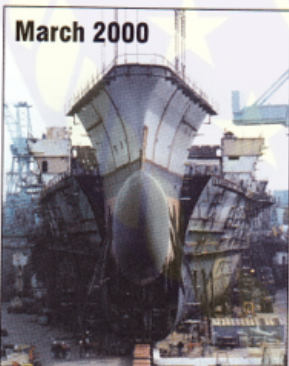
Mar 1998



June 1999



March 2000



March 2000



Nov 2000



Vice President Richard Cheney was keynote speaker at the commissioning.

The Navy's newest and most sophisticated nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, *USS Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76), was commissioned July 12, 2003 at Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia. Named after America's 40th president, Reagan is the ninth Nimitz-class aircraft carrier built by Northrop Grumman Newport News and the first carrier named for a living president.

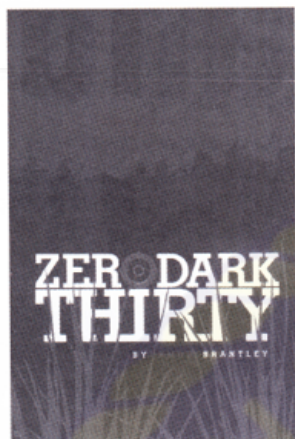
The keynote speaker for the commissioning ceremony was Vice President of the United States, Richard Cheney. Mrs. Ronald Reagan also attended the ceremony and served as the ship's sponsor. Other dignitaries included Virginia Governor Mark Warner, Virginia Senator John Warner, Acting Secretary of the Navy Hansford Johnson, Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Vern Clark, and Northrop Grumman Newport News President Tom Schiavelbein. Northrop Grumman Chairman of the Board Kent Kresa and Northrop Grumman Chief Executive Officer and President Ron Sugar were also in attendance.

As Mrs. Reagan took her place at the podium, the large crowd cheered loudly and gave her a standing ovation. In the time-honored Navy tradition, she then gave the order to "man our ship and bring her to life!"

Zero Dark Thirty: Samuel Brantley, Hellgate Press, 270 pages.

Zero Dark Thirty is not just another bang-bang, shoot-shoot combat autobiography. The reader finds out early on that the book's title forewarns the dark separation and isolation of those

Flying Cover Skyhawks in print



who have experienced actual combat from those who have not, which is the continual theme of the book. Samuel Brantley divided his story into rough thirds. Most of the aviation-related material comes in the first part, which is a journey through the transformation of wannabe to MARCAD to winged Naval Aviator, finally flying A-4Es out of Chu Lai in South Viet Nam during 1968. Brantley provides good, colorful detail on flying the Scooter on CAS (Close Air Support) of Mud Marines as well as day and night trips Up North. Brantley clearly loves the A-4: "The Scoot was a fabulous little device." Later parts of the book give good detail from his experience as an LSO (Landing Signals Officer), who got his boat qualification in order to be able to wave Marine Aviators in SATS (Short Airfield for Tactical Support) operations, which are carrier landings without ramp strikes. He also details the joy of special weapons

delivery and Air Combat Maneuvering. He makes the true point that "single-seat aircraft are private places."

But the heart of the book begins with his subsequent assignment as a FAC (Forward Air Controller) to the First Battalion of the Seventh Marines, part of the ground force in the Bush, defending Da Nang. This reviewer has been a constant reader of accounts of infantry combat throughout history, and

Brantley is among the best in describing the time-compressed, shocking violence of fire fights. He continually makes up effective words for the sound-effects of combat and in describing personal imagery. The Marines in this story are far, far away from the dope-smoking nutcases presented in films—they are hard-eyed killers in an environment where "you can't hesitate and live." In this reviewer's opinion, this is far and away the best account of the war in the Viet Nam bush.

Finally, Brantley must face the world back home, where nobody has a clue. The entire combat experience has separated him from those who have not; he has isolated himself from personal relationships that all too often ended in fireballs or screaming collections of disjointed body parts. There is survivor guilt, then anger. His complete absorption with tactical aviation while training combat aviators with VMT-103 at MCAS Yuma precludes bother with anything else. He loses his family, becomes disillusioned with a Marine Corps where a skipper tells him that "Real combat and excellence are about gone, they want paper now." But his journey outside the military leads through society where he does not fit, and he essentially becomes a desert hermit, sleeping with his gun.

There is some peace, finally, confronting the Black Granite Registry down the way from the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, D. C. But not before working through a session of "deep, fiery, undirected, unfocused, monumental, inexplicable rage."

Combat veterans will recognize elements of Brantley's story in their own lives. Thankfully, most of us have adapted better.

CDR Jack Woodul, USN (Retired)

[Aka "Youthly Puresome" in the Tailhook Association's quarterly "The Hook" magazine.]

High Flight (FAA Supplement)

1. Pilots must insure that all surly bonds have been slipped entirely before flight is attempted.
2. During periods of severe sky dancing, crew and passengers must keep seatbelts fastened. Crew should wear shoulder belts as provided.
3. Sunward climbs must not exceed the maximum permitted aircraft ceiling.
4. Passenger aircraft are prohibited from joining the tumbling mirth.
5. Pilots flying through sun-split clouds under VFR conditions must comply with all applicable minimum clearances.
6. Do not perform these hundred things in front of Federal Aviation Administration inspectors.
7. Wheeling, soaring, and swinging will not be attempted except in aircraft rated for such activities and within utility class weight limits.
8. Be advised that sunlit silence will occur only when a major engine malfunction has occurred.
9. "Hov'ring there" will constitute a highly reliable signal that a flight emergency is imminent.
10. Forecasts of shouting winds are available from the local FSS. Encounters with unexpected shouting winds should be reported by pilots.
11. Pilots flinging eager craft through footless halls of air are reminded that they alone are responsible for maintaining separation from other eager craft.
12. Should any crew member or passenger experience delirium while in the burning blue, submit an irregularity report upon flight termination.
13. Windswept heights will be topped by a minimum of 1,000 feet to maintain VFR minimum separations.
14. Aircraft engine ingestion of, or impact with, larks or eagles should be reported to the FAA and the appropriate aircraft maintenance facility.
15. Aircraft operating in the high untrespassed sanctity of space must remain in IFR flight regardless of meteorological conditions and visibility.
16. Pilots and passengers are reminded that opening doors or windows in order to touch the face of God may result in loss of cabin pressure.

The Gospel according to St. Fresnel of the Miraculous Lens

In the Beginning, God created the Heavens, the Aircraft Carrier, and the Sea upon which to float it; yet there was complete Darkness upon the face of the earth. As we traveled there came to us, as a voice out of the darkness, an Angel of the Lord, saying, "On centerline, on Glideslope, three quarters of a mile, call the ball." I reflected upon these words, for I was still yet engulfed in complete darkness. With deep feeling and doubt overwhelming my countenance, I glanceth towards my companion at my right hand and saith, "What seeth thou, trusted friend?", and there was a great silence. Gazing in a searching manner and seeing naught, I raised my voice saying, "Clara."

God spoke to me, and He said, "'You're low... power". As the Lord saith, so shall it be, and I added power; and lo, the ball riseth up onto the bottom of the mirror. But it was a tainted red glow, and surely indicateth Satan's own influence. And God spoke to me again saying, "Power... Power... Power! Fly the ball." And lo, the ball riseth up and off the top of the lens, and the great darkness was upon me.

The voice of the Angel came to me again, saying, "When comfortable, twelve hundred feet, turn downwind." Whereupon I wandered in the darkness, without direction. Surely the ships radar was beset by demons, and there was great confusion cast upon CATCC, and there was a great silence in which there was no comfort to be found. Even my TACAN needle spinneth, and lo, there was chaos. My trusted companion weepeth quietly unto himself and from close behind I heard

weeping and gnashing of teeth of our flock. There was a great turmoil within my cockpit for a multitude of serpents had crept therein.

And though we wandered, as if by Providence I found myself within that Holy Corridor, and at twelve hundred feet, among my brethren seeking refuge. And the voice of the Angel of the Lord came to me again, asking of me my needles. I raised my voice saying, "Up and centered," and the voice answered, "Roger, fly your needles." I reflected upon these words, and I raised my voice in prayer, for though my gyro indicateth it not so, surely my aircraft hath been turned upside down. Verily, as Beelzebub surely wrestled with me, a voice, that of my trusted companion, saith to me calmly, "Friend, fly thy needles, and find comfort in the Lord." With deep trembling in my heart, I did, and He guideth me to centered glide slope and centerline, though I know not how it came to be.

Out of the great darkness, God spoke to me again saying, "Roger ball," and now I had faith. Though the ball began to rise at the in close position, my right hand was full of the Spirit, and it squeaketh off power and as in a great miracle my plane stoppeth upon the flight deck. It hath caught the four-wire which God in his infinite wisdom hath placed thirty feet farther down the flight deck than the three-wire.

And thus bathed in a golden radiance from above, our pilgrimage was at an end, and my spirit was truly reborn. And as I basked in the rapture, God spoketh to me one final time, and He saith, "Lights out on deck."

Join the Skyhawk Association and get a free patch



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) plus \$1 postage, 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:

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