



THE SKYHAWK ASSOCIATION

Journal



*A-4s over Oskosh at
Airventure 2010*

THE A-4 EVER

Fall 2010

Skyhawk Association

VOLUME 16 • NUMBER 3

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www.skyhawk.org



THE (NEW) PREZ SEZ

• From the Hun •



By Todd Frommelt

Good day dirtbags (Marine term of endearment, trust me)! This is the “Hun” writing...as new President of the world renowned Skyhawk Association. That’s right; there’s been a change of command. For those of you who grew accustomed to and enamored with the Raven’s Presidency, apologies. He was an overworked, aging, not-even-retired-yet, elderly statesman of the community who badly needed some relief. (Raven is, thankfully, staying on as the Journal editor.) In his place, you’ve got me. That’s Todd Frommelt, LtCol, USMC (retired), with a career of Marine A-4’s (just under 4000 hours), another career with TWA and American Airlines (mostly MD-80’s), happily retired from both, happily married this time, older guy with four grown up kids and still adding Grandkids, hailing from Carlsbad, CA.

I’m now the who?... I get to “Fleet where?”

First things first. Thanks Raven, from all of us on a super job...4 or 5 years as a director, 5 as president, and most of that ‘double downing’ as the editor of the association’s Journal. Still working too! Judy must pretty much be an angel to put up with all that. While Raven’s been with the Association everything has improved, from the Journal to the web site, to Board operations. Most importantly, membership numbers

have not only stabilized, but reversed a mid-life downward trend which now has our numbers rising steadily. Thank you Bob, from all of us. *A-4’s Forever.*

Where we are:

About 880 members strong, and that’s up some 16 net just in the first 8 months of the calendar year. A nice 80% retention rate this year too. With a net worth of about \$45,000, we’re running a fairly balanced yearly revenue and expense budget, with about \$15,000 in and out. Most of the excess net worth is, of course, dues money paid in advance with our 3 year dues deal. Our major expense by far is the Journal, with other major funds committed to our annual meeting’s luncheon, some Tailhook advertising/booth fees, and awards and special project support. We have some great relationships with US contract outfits and foreign services still flying the Skyhawk. We’ve also got great relationships with naval aviation artists, like the R.G. Smith operation (run by Daughter Shar) and High Iron Illustrations, which offer the works of John Doughty and other artisans/craftsmen like Dave Garcia of Delphic Fine Art. One of our best used services is our body (all of you out there) of Skyhawk knowledge resident in the Association. Rarely a week goes by that our web page or one of the members doesn’t



New Prez “The Hun” with long-suffering wife, Jeanne.

refer a technical or personal A-4 question to our “corporate” memory banks. Our possibly least appreciated asset is, of course, our web site, www.skyhawk.org. For those of you who haven’t yet made the time to do so, take an hour or so to delve into some of our amazing archives...histories of aircraft, squadrons, static displays/monuments, photos, videos, aviation links, fellow member rosters, etc. Not only is there lots to see, but it’s getting better all the time!

Our last meeting was held during the 2010 Tailhook in Reno, NV 9-11 September. This is the traditional mandatory Board of Director’s meeting and Annual Meeting of the Association. I know a lot of you don’t go to Tailhook (I didn’t until I got on the association BOD), but do plan on coming to one of these someday...you’ll find it a fun trip as well as seeing the Board in action! We host a booth and rub elbows with all the industry vendors, have a morning Board meeting, a luncheon that doubles as the venue for our annual meeting of the members, and we always have a super speaker. This year we got a great update on and from CNATRA. In addition to all that, you get the Tailhook fun and all the serious panels and forums about today’s Naval Aviation status you could wish for. And, along with the Intruder Association, we host a great Attack Ready Room full of Senator’s A-4 videos/slideshows and liquid refreshments.

That’s probably a good opening to announce the other BOD changes made at this year’s meetings. First, we accepted Bob’s resignation, I fled up from Marine VP to President and Bill Egen took over the Marine VP slot. Next, Ed Jobin had to drop off the Board and our nominating committee

continued...



“Where do we get such men?”, (with apologies to James Michener). Skyhawk Association board at 2010 Annual Meeting, Reno, NV. L-R, front row: Mark Williams, Pete Cole, John Gabbard, and Dave Dollarhide. Second row, L-R: Todd Frommelt, Joe Turpen, Terry Cooney, Bill Egen, Mike Eberhardt and Ted Langworthy.



IN MEMORY OF
M. DAVIS "WHIZZER" WHITE, D.D.S
(1939-2007)
FOUNDER OF THE SKYHAWK ASSOCIATION

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BOMBS AWAY!

• Fall 2010 •



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NEWSLETTER STAFF



Bob "Raven" Hickerson – Chairman and Editor.
Boom Powell and Mark Williams - Co-Editors.
David "Twidget" Weber – Technology and Website.
Feature Contributors: Ed "Viking" Jobin, Peter Mersky, Joe Turpen,
Gary Verver, David "Twidget" Weber, and Jack "Puresome" Woodul.

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Contributions

We actively seek contributions from members, including news, photos, historical documents, anecdotes and other items of interest. Submissions may be edited due to space limitations in the newsletter. Contributions may be emailed to the Newsletter Editor at sa-journal-editor@a4skyhawk.org or mailed to Bob Hickerson, 1222 Balcones Drive, Fredericksburg, TX 78624.

Stephanie Davis, graphics, skyhawk@ncflight.com. Printed by NCCOAST Communications, Morehead City, NC.

Cover: A-4s fill the skies over Oshkosh 2010. Warbird Heritage Foundation A-4B 142112 and Collings Foundation TA-4J 153524 performed for crowds at Airventure last summer. (Photo by Ken Crist)

THE PREZ SEZ MORE...

latched on to Steve Linder as a replacement. Steve is Naval Academy Marine A-4/AV-8 gentleman, too young to be retired, and lives with his family in Las Vegas. Welcome aboard "Dwarf"! And, amazingly enuf, we had five Board members agree to renew their 3 year terms!

Other significant business at the meeting... We received an update on the Association-sponsored A-4 Monument display at the Naval Academy's Hubbard Hall. Fundraising (including the parts donations) has reached its goal, and manager Dutch Rauch estimates a commencement of the actual restoration work by the time you're reading this... about a 2 month process. So next time you visit the Academy make sure you take a look! We also decided to work up an addition to the Association's bylaws codifying the term of 2 years for the office of President. Look for the Journal to carry the verbiage in the next issue and instructions on how to vote your say on the matter. We also approved an "internal Board policy" as reflected in the minutes for, as the situation permits, fleeting up Navy and Marine VP's alternately to the office of President. Another approved "internal Board policy" is to assign shadow alternates to each officer of the Board and other action officers assigned. And we're spending

about \$200 to update the Association's pack-up kit transport case. The case is used to move our banners, artwork and other booth materials to the Board and Annual meetings.

Where we'd like to go:

As Raven bombarded us relentlessly, it's Membership, Membership, Membership, and we intend to stay the course on our work there. I'm hoping for increased help from our SDO's, some fleshing out of the Navy potential membership contact lists as we saw happen in our preparation for this past May's Marine A-4 Reunion, and our current membership getting out there to make contacts, find potential members, and stress our charter and the benefits we bring to the table. Local reunions and get-togethers have been growing larger and more frequent...and we want to expand that beyond the groups that meet now. Above all else, we're a fraternal and social organization. If we can't get new members by reminding them of the chance to renew those fraternal bonds, then we probably aren't worth our salt. Hey, that was the Scooter's claim to fame! Solo attack jocks with unit and community camaraderie and skills to never be out there 'alone'.

Contacts are tough to remake in today's mobile world. We've come to use



RADM Bill Sizemore, Chief of Naval Air Training (CNATRA), updates members on naval air training.

and value email over snail mail these days. That's not just the Association, it's everyone. We want to hang on to those elder comrades who feel they're too old to make the transition while getting everyone else on board with current, up to date email addresses. We're only about 2/3 of the way there with our 880 man roster now. And with the Journal down to 3 issues a year for budget reasons, I plan to get "gap filler" email newsletters out to the membership in between issues. I'm hoping that will help keep us in touch and promote the proliferation of our message.



Annual meeting and luncheon of Skyhawk Association, September 10, 2010, Nugget Hotel, Reno, NV.



Association VP (USN) and Chief Pilot Mike "Buick" Eberhardt presents memento to RADM Bill Sizemore, Chief of Naval Air Training (CNATRA), updates members on naval air training. following luncheon presentation.



This looks like trouble! Hospitality Suite HMFIC Youthly Puresome (Jack Woodul) (L), Dave Dollarhide and Apprentice Prez Todd "The Hun" Frommelt. Skyhawk Association joins with the Intruder Association each year to provide a refuge for thirsty members.



Skyhawk stalwarts Terry Cooney, John Gabbard and Joe Turpen man Association booth in Tailhook exhibit area.

The Association website is another area where change is imminent. Gene and David are well along with a redesigned site that should be improved and updated throughout. It's going to be an even greater asset soon and should help with membership recruitment even more.

OK, I can see Raven the editor grimacing over the length of this hello note already. Let me wrap up my first "Prez Sez" with some advance info on our "Winter" meeting. That's our buzzword for the BOD meeting we hold approximately in between the annual SA Reno Tailhook events. With 2011

and 2012 being the Naval and Marine (respectively) Aviation Centennials, it seems appropriate to have the mid-Tailhook meetings these coming two years at venues which will have significant Centennial celebration events, while still moving the general location around the country. This coming year we've selected Navy Corpus as our venue during their "Tier One" Centennial celebrations, which includes the Blues as well as other activities not yet announced. The Board will meet Saturday, April 9th, 0900-1200, on board the good old USS Lexington Museum on the Bay. Ship tour, air show, NAS Kingsville

tours and other events will keep us busy at least Fri thru Saturday. It looks like we'll base out of the Omni Hotel within sight of the Lex. Please come join us!

Enuf already! Thanks for your attention and I'm looking forward to working and playing with and for you this next couple of years!
Hun out

[Ed. note: See Scheduling Stuff this issue, the Skyhawk Association home page (www.skyhawk.org) and The A-4Ever, Spring 2011 for more details on the April board meeting. Make your hotel reservations early!]

SCHEDULING STUFF

• Reunions & Requests •



PLAN AHEAD



Skyhawk Association Board Meeting: Saturday morning, April 9, 2011, USS Lexington, Corpus Christi, TX. Coinciding with NAS Corpus Christi's Centennial of Naval Aviation observance, the board is planning several special events for Skyhawk Association members April 8th and 9th, including a special tour of the NAS Kingsville, a Lexington tour, the Blue Angel air show, and more. The Omni Corpus Christi Marina Tower, 707 N. Shoreline Blvd., will be the headquarters hotel, and a block of rooms at a special rate will be available. Watch announcements on the Skyhawk Association home page, www.skyhawk.org, for more information, including instructions on making reservations for the block of hotel rooms.



Marine Corps Aviation Association Symposium, May 18-21, 2011, Town and Country Hotel, San Diego, CA. See www.flymcaa.org for details.



Skyhawk Association 2011 Annual Meeting and Luncheon: 11:30 a.m., September 9, 2011, Tailhook Symposium 2011, Reno, NV.



VINTAGE GANN

• The First TA-4 •

By Harry Gann, Skyhawk Historian

Ed. Note: Although Harry Gann is best known for his photography, he served as historian for Skyhawk Association during our formative years. He authored this article for the Summer 1999 edition of the Skyhawk Association newsletter.

The two-placed version of the *Skyhawk* came about in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when the Douglas Aircraft Company repeatedly pointed out to the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps the advantages of stretching the fuselage of the *Skyhawk* and installing another crew position. This second seat could be used for training or otherwise aiding the mission. However, the budget was tight, and it took the Vietnam conflict to open the purse strings. While the primary mission appeared to be that of an advanced trainer, the concept was initially sold as a two-place combat plane with all of the weapons capabilities of the single-place *Skyhawk*. This would allow the release of existing A-4s for combat that were used in the replacement squadrons to bring the pilots up to speed for duty in Southeast Asia.

To facilitate this program, the last two A-4E aircraft of an existing contract were pulled from the production line and altered to this new configuration. Initially, these two aircraft, bureau numbers 152102 and 152103, were designated as TA-4Es.

In addition to the 28-inch fuselage plug, instruments and dual controls nec-

essary for the second seat, other improvements that were common to the A-4F were also incorporated. Included was the latest version of the Douglas-designed ejection seat, the Escape 1C-3. This rocket-driven seat would allow the crew to eject from a disabled aircraft while at ground altitude and with zero forward velocity. Nose-wheel steering and wing lift spoilers on the upper trailing edge of the wings to facilitate crosswind landings were also added. A clam-shell canopy enclosed the crew. Since the second cockpit station replaced the fuselage fuel tank, Douglas suggested adding a faired fuel tank to the top aft fuselage. The contractor rejected the idea. (*Ed. Note: What a shame! Many TA-4 pilots would have welcomed that additional fuel.*)

BuNo 152102 made its maiden flight on June 30, 1965. Shortly after this flight, the aircraft was re-designated TA-4F to reflect the airframe changes.

The TA-4F *Skyhawks* became operational in May of 1966 with VA-125 at NAS Lemoore, California, the West coast replacement training squadron.

Some of the TA-4F aircraft were assigned to the Marine Corps H&MS squadrons (Headquarters and Maintenance, later re-designated as MALS--Maintenance and Logistic squadrons). Here they used their ordnance capability to perform the FAST-FAC mission where they pinpointed the targets for the heavy hitters.



The first Douglas mockup of the two-seat TA-4, BuNo 52102.



The second TA-4E, BuNo 152103, during trials.

When the Training Command secured funding to replace the TF-9J *Cougars* and the F11F-1 *Tigercats*, the TA-4J *Skyhawk* was designed and built. These tailored trainers entered service with VT-21 in mid-1969, and differed from the TA-4F by deleting some equipment such as the tactical weapons systems and radar. Later, most TA-4F aircraft were modified to the TA-4J configuration for assignment to the Training Command, as well as various VC squadrons.

Of the 2,960 *Skyhawks* built, 555 were the two-place versions, and 518 of these were used by the United States. The balance (TA-4G, TA-4H, TA-4K and the TA-4Ku) were delivered to foreign operators, some of whom also converted some of their single place aircraft to two-place versions. This was mainly due to the advantages of standardization of engines, but also because of the unavailability of surplus USN trainers to overseas operators until just recently. These modified trainers were called TA-4S and TA-4PTM.

BuNo 152102, the first TA-4F, remained bailed to Douglas for some time and was used for general R&D testing and chase flying. It was later delivered to China Lake to continue testing in support of their mission of evaluating the operational capability of fleet strike aircraft. Recently, it was assigned to the museum now being established there, where it will be one of many aircraft displays portraying China Lake's role in the United States defense effort.



Here is a TA-4E 152102 during a flight test. Note the instrumentation probe on the refueling probe.

TAKE NO PRISONERS

• Letters to the Editor •

sa-journal-editor@a4skyhawk.org



Share the wisdom:
sa-journal-editor@a4skyhawk.org

Please note email address!

To the Editor:

Dear Sir,

My name is Captain Carlos A. Matias, and I am a Brazilian Navy pilot and a former Commanding Officer of the São Pedro da Aldeia Naval Air Base.

I have joined The Skyhawk Association last year, and I have [ed. note: as suggested by the Naval Aviation Commander, Admiral Nelson Garrone Palma Velloso] created at that time a new square inside the Base with one of our A-4 Skyhawks (former A-4KU) on display. I would like to include it on the list in the site.

The aircraft Bu No is 160183, a former A-4KU, designated by the Brazilian Navy as AF-1 N-1003 after buying it from the Kuwait Air Force in 1998. The Aircraft was used by the VF-1 Naval Air Squadron and retired last year.

A photo of the aircraft on display is attached. I can send you another if you wish. If you need more information about the plane, I would be pleased to help.

I would like to request a message back in order to confirm you have received this e-mail.

Thank you very much,
Captain Matias



◆ ◆ ◆

To Rick St. Pierre:

Rick,

My name is Dan Brannon, and I wanted to let you know that I had read the story about you and your son's work and dedication to restore Mike Gershon's A-4. I am a retired Marine and had the great fortune of flying the A-4 during my years in the Corps. I also

had the pleasure of knowing Mike as I was his primary instructor in the A-4 at VT-4, Sherman Field, Pensacola, FL. In fact, I flew him on his first two familiarization flights in the TA4J in February 1977. I must say that he was one of my best aviation students, and it did not surprise me at all when he was selected to be a Blue Angel. Thankfully, he had dinner with my wife and me about two weeks before his tragic accident. It had been some time since we had talked, and it was also when I found out about the birth of his new son. My wife and I do think about him, and we hope his wife and son are doing well. Again, I do not think anyone can explain to you and your son what your efforts mean; not only to the Gershon family, but to all service men and women who serve and have served. I am also very sure that one Angel is very pleased with your work. Thank you and God Bless.

Semper Fi,

Dan

Dan Brannon "Dapper"

[DMBandMJB@OurHome.comcastbiz.net]

PS: I have cc'd Bob Hickerson in appreciation for his having placed your story in The Skyhawk Association Journal.

◆ ◆ ◆

To the Editor:

Bob,

I read the article about *Resurrecting an Angel* (Summer 2010) with interest, especially after I saw its history included a four year stint with the Ghostriders (VA-164). Curiosity overcame the comfort of my couch and sent me in search of my logbook. Sure 'nuff, I had 23 hops in bu. no. 155027 - all but a couple over the beach in Indian Country in 1972.

Kudos to Rick and Nick for bringing the tough old bird back to life again and putting her in a place many can admire her beauty.

Johnny Bittick

Magic 3

[johnb40@juno.com]

◆ ◆ ◆

To the Editor,

Please bear with me, I'm not much of a Personnel Man, or computer whiz either. The reason for my contact is I was checking the last journal (I save them all) for the address to send my dues. I realized that the last one I received was fall 2009. Was there a spring and summer 2010? If so I missed them. When I joined something happened (I think I didn't make it on the mailing list or something). You sent me the fall as well as the spring issue. Thank you very much! I didn't know if the spring or summer 2010 issues had been sent or not. If so I missed them? Also are the dues still \$30?

Now the more fun or boring part, whichever. Thanks for the heads up on The Rescue of Streetcar 304. Great read, I couldn't put it down. The article by Mr. Stratton sure brought back memories. I was the flight deck "Tweet" (67) for The World Famous Golden Dragons. Before launch, we went to all the aircraft in our squadron making sure that the TACAN and radios worked, before our "see ya! later" salute. We didn't remember the ones that took off, but we sure remembered the ones that didn't come back. Mr. Stratton was one of those that I still remember. Being on the bottom of the scuttlebutt chain, the only thing I heard was, his wingman said they were on a rocket run with no enemy fire, when he looked over and saw smoke pouring from the forward hell hole. The next time I saw him was on the cover of (I believe it was Look Magazine) standing half way out of an underground cell. Mr. McKellar was one of the nicest Commanding Officers you could ask for. In 2005 I went to San Diego with a group of VA 21 fighter pukes, (just kidding), for a mini reunion. We toured the Mighty Midway, and on the hangar deck entrance there was an A4E that they're using as a background for group photos. It was a VA-192 nose number 201, with Edwin McKellar painted under the cockpit rail. I'm not sure if you know, after he retired he became the *continued...*

LETTERS

Continued...

driving force and curator of the Air and Space Museum in Balboa Park. There's an A4B on display there next to a shiny F18 in Blue Angel dress. Also Mr. Stratton mentioned Mike Estocin (I'm sure you've Googled his bio -- if not please do). He was quite a man.

I recently purchased a toy that will convert slides to digital. If I can figure out how to use it, I'll bore you with some slides (mid 60s era). Well, you have suffered enough bad grammar and miss spelled words. Please let me know about the dues and journals. I'll be zip-ping on along now.

Ed Bumgarner
[aka Easy Ed]
[edbumgarner@sbcglobal.net]

◆ ◆ ◆

To the Editor:

Guess it is for sale now.

Enjoyed your write-up,
Pete

Pete Yonke

[peteyonke@bellsouth.net]

TA-4 SKYHAWK • \$5,950,000 •
AVAILABLE FOR SALE • METICU-
LOUSLY RESTORED DOUGLAS TA-
4 SKYHAWK - Over 45,000 hours of
labor produced this extraordinary TA-4
where the high level of workmanship
is seen in every detail. N518TA was
completely disassembled & thoroughly
inspected/overhauled. The electrical
system wiring was replaced, with new/
improved wire installed & marked with
complete diagrams. The reliable P&W
J52-8B engine has only 10 hrs TTSOH
by Safe Air.

Upgrades/improvements too numer-
ous to mention here. Painted factory
gull grey/white-just add your squadron
colors & markings. Ground & flight
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281-3506 . 425-765-7799

[Ed. note: See cover story, the A-4Ever,
Summer 2010]

◆ ◆ ◆

To the Editor:

My roommate, a maintenance of-
ficer, took this picture of A-4E 151200
as I was manning up on April 10, 1967.
The airplane now rests on the bottom of
the Tonkin Gulf, and I got a helicopter
ride back to the ship.

I was the CVW-19 LSO at that time,
flying the VA-192 A4's. That day Mike
Estocin had to cancel for a meeting of
some kind and asked me to take his
flight. "Never volunteer for anything."

George

George Shattuck

gwsms2@plantationcable.net



[Ed. note: I asked George to provide
some information on the flight.]

It was just one of those road recce
things we did so much of. My wingman
was Rick Millson, who later joined the
Blues for a two-year tour. We were at
roughly 10K and about to roll in on a
barge-like thingy on the river near Vinh,
no visible flak. What was probably a
37mm round blew through my right
wing, blowing a huge hole and severely
damaging the engine and setting the
fuel on fire, which trailed behind the
airplane like a torch (by Rick's ac-
count). Rick was, of course, telling me
to eject, fire, and all that. The cockpit
filled with dense smoke, but through the
mist I could see the fire light flashing.
From a Minnesota farm boy's perspec-
tive, I was over the North, bad thing,
but still in one piece, good thing. I hit
the dump switch, rolled right side up,
armed up, pickled my load of 250's and
headed for the coast. When all the fuel
went away the fire went out so over the
water, Steve Young (VA-192) in the A4
tanker slides up, but I had no throttle
control. Interestingly, I tried talking



Steve to a position ahead of me and
backing the drogue onto my probe, bad
idea, but after a couple of attempts, and
dangerous lashings around of the bas-
ket, we gave it up. When the fuel in the
fuselage tank ran out I found out that
the A4 is not a good glider and ejected.
A mail helo returning from the northern
SAR DD was in the area so I was not in
the water long. Those good folks gave
me a lift back to the Tico.

As I mentioned previously, I was the
CAG-19 LSO. My boss was Billy Phil-
lips, the WGFP, and CAG Ops was Ted
Fellows. There were lots of notables on
that deployment. I understand R.J.L.
Nelson (VF-194) is writing a book of
our escapades.

About five years ago, that helo's
door gunner/crewman contacted me
through the Skyhawk Assn, wanting
to know what happened to that pilot
he fished out of the Tonkin Gulf. Tony
Hewyer(sp) was his name, and he was
running FedEx's maintenance facility
in Anchorage. After I got in the helo,
Tony and I blazed away at my raft with
my .38 and his rifle of some kind, so
it would sink and not be a false SAR
concern for others.

Later in my career, I went on to the
RA-5C Vigilante, and made one more
combat cruise (Nov 1971 to June 1972)
and later to XO/CO of RVAH-5.

George Shattuck

◆ ◆ ◆

To the Editor:

The VA 94 Shrikes of 1960-1963
gathered in Yukon, Oklahoma, for their
second squadron reunion. Their first
was held in St. Louis, MO, where 13
members showed up plus their wives
and girl friends in 2008. Some of the
members had not seen each other in
over 40 years.

The 2010 reunion had 25 members
and wives, including members we
hadn't seen before. We started off by
having a banquet catered by a good
BBQ restaurant. The mayor of Yu-
kon spoke, a full page write-up was



FROM THE EDITOR

• Raven's Ramblings •

By Bob "Raven" Hickerson

I've got both good news and bad news. The good news is that our managing editor of the last six years, Margaret Bone (a.k.a. Warrior Princess) has decided to retire and live the good life in coastal North Carolina. The bad news is that she won't be guiding the publication of *The A-4Ever* in the future.

While we certainly wish W.P. all the best in her retirement, we are feeling a little sorry for ourselves. Those who have been members for more than six years are aware of what a difference her guiding hand has made in our publication. We went from putting out an adequate, small-time "newsletter" to publishing a 4-color, 24-page journal which has gained great respect in the military aircraft community nationwide. Her first effort was the Summer 2004 issue which dramatically changed the standard and expectations for our association and aided substantially, I believe, a reversal of our downward trend in membership. Our association will always be indebted to Margaret for her friendship and professionalism, and we hope that she will consider herself a member for life and keep in touch.

Fortunately, Stephanie Davis, a freelance graphics layout consultant who has been working with Margaret for many years, has agreed to help us stay the course as we move forward. Stephanie also lives in North Carolina and has easy access to our printing contractor. I think Stephanie will do a great job and

appreciate her stepping forward to help.

In this issue, we're privileged to be the first to publish Admiral James L. Holloway's essay, *TRIBUTE to the TINKER TOY; The Navy's Skyhawk Bantam Bomber*, which was written for an essay contest sponsored by the John A. Adams '71 Center for Military History and Strategic Analysis. Admiral Holloway received Honorable Mention for his essay, and it will surely be printed in many prestigious journals. We are presenting it in two parts due to its length, and I'm sure that in this first installment our readers will recognize its importance in capturing the role of the Skyhawk during the Cold War years.

If you read the Prez Says column, you will have noted that we've had a change of command. It's been an honor to serve as your president since 2005, but I'm very excited about our prospects under the leadership of Todd "The Hun" Frommelt. Todd is both talented and enthusiastic, and I know that the association will benefit from an injection of fresh ideas, both from the president and the new board of directors.

I'm planning to stay involved as editor of the journal, hoping to have more time to try out new ideas as I retire from my day job next January. Two ideas that we've talked about for a long time may actually come to fruition. One is the creation of an index of journal content. Now that we have over six years of consistent publication, I constantly find

myself searching through a stack of old copies looking for an article or citation. I don't know what form it will take, or how we will provide it to members, but an index of our publication is now in the works.

The second idea (long overdue) is routine expansion of our print journal content onto the web. With the launching of our new generation website by Gene Atwell and David Weber, I hope to create a seamless transition between the print journal, which is extremely limited in space, to the limitless environment offered by the world-wide web. If we can accomplish this, we'll be able to connect our membership with the full content of articles submitted, as opposed to the condensed versions we now publish. As an added benefit, this transition will aid our long-range plans to better connect with our membership using the many high-tech tools that are ubiquitous in our modern world.

So, I'll close this first edition of *From the Editor* with a familiar plea. Keep those stories coming! We wouldn't have a journal at all if members didn't send us stories and other types of content, including photos, maps, charts, flight guides and more. Remember that you don't have to worry overmuch about the form, spelling or grammar. None of us (well, not many at any rate) are college professors (thank God), and we can help polish your input to make you look like a pro! If you have something you think we might be interested in, shoot me an email at sa-journal-editor@a4skyhawk.org. Meanwhile, A-4s forever!

Raven

LETTERS continued

published in the local paper, a commander of a squadron stationed at Tinker Air Force Base came, and the television news station out of Oklahoma City was there. They interviewed our Skipper, Jack Endacott, and another pilot. The attendees got a tour and lunch at the Western Heritage Cowboy Hall of Fame on Friday and topped it off by having dinner by the lake. They enjoyed themselves, especially seeing old friends and telling tall tales, stories and possibly a few lies.

The next reunion will be in 2012.

Jerry Stafford
[jerrykay803@aol.com]

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To whom it may concern:

I flew A-4s in VT-25 back in 1985-1987 as a student and then as an instructor. I am trying to track down a cloisonné pin for VT-25 (the pin on the name tag). I have my old name tag, but apparently a pin was never put on or one was never made.

Any info on where I might find

one would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks in advance,
CAPT Andy Whitson
[andy.whitson@navy.mil]

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TRIBUTE TO THE TINKER TOY

• The Navy's Skyhawk Bantam Bombert •

By Admiral James L. Holloway III, USN (Ret)

(Ed. Note: Admiral Holloway wrote this article for submission to the Sixth Cold War essay contest sponsored by the John A. Adam '71 Center for Military History and Strategic Analysis, in which it was awarded honorable mention. Part II will be printed in *The A-4Ever Spring 2011*.)

Part I.

"Forget about TNT bombs. This is 1953. It will be tactical nuclear weapons from now on."

The source of these startling comments was a prominent and respected captain in the Plans Division of the CNO Staff. He was explaining to me that Livermore Laboratories had developed a 1,000 lb tactical hydrogen bomb with a yield of 300 KT. It was designed to be carried by carrier planes and was already in production to go into the magazines of carriers deploying to the Sixth and Seventh Fleets. He added that Ed Heineman, the brilliant chief designer at Douglas Aircraft Company in El Segundo, CA was working on the design of a single seat carrier-based attack aircraft designed from the tread up for the purpose of carrying and dropping tactical nuclear weapons. It was to be the A-4 "Skyhawk."

I was a LCDR visiting Washington at the direction of Commander Naval Air Forces Pacific Fleet at San Diego where I was stationed. I had just returned from a tour of duty as executive officer of a carrier squadron on a combat deployment in the Korean War. The ostensible purpose was to debrief my experiences flying jets on air-to-ground missions against a well armed enemy. I thought I had a lot to say. In the last three months of the war, my squadron, Fighter Squadron FIFTY TWO, flying F9F-2 Panthers had been hard hit. The squadron lost eight planes, including my own, to enemy AAA fire. Among the pilots lost were my wingman and the squadron commander, whom I succeeded with a battlefield

promotion. I was prepared to voice my personal recommendations for changes in tactics and doctrine that could lower the aircraft attrition rate without reducing our enemy kill quotient.

It was my first visit ever to the Pentagon and I was sufficiently awed by the aura of rank and the atmosphere of crisis that I decided I had better listen before making my pitch. From the Captain's further remarks I gathered that much had happened since I had deployed to Korea a year ago aboard the carrier *USS Boxer*.



CDR James L. Holloway seated in the cockpit of a Douglas A4D "Skyhawk" attack aircraft, while serving as commanding officer of Attack Squadron 83 (VA-83) on *USS Essex* (CVA-9), 25 June 1958. Photographed by Piatek. Official U.S. Navy Photograph, from the collections of the Naval Historical Center.

There was still a war on – the Cold War. The evolving concept of current history says that Korea and Vietnam were successive campaigns in a larger and more desperate struggle, that began with the end of WWII and lasted over four decades until the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1989. This was the Cold War.

During this epic struggle between the Western Powers and the Soviet Bloc, the absolute survival of the United States was at stake. The Soviet Union was our adversary during the Cold

War. The USSR, through its enormous armies had the capability to overwhelm and occupy Western Europe in weeks. Their nuclear arsenal, which by the 1970's had reached an essential equivalence with ours, had an estimated 12,000 warheads targeted against the United States with the capacity to inflict 180 million casualties on our population and destroy our industrial economy. The United States fought major conflicts with Korea, China and Vietnam during this time, but those countries did not represent direct threats to our national survival. The Soviet Union alone had the capacity to challenge the very existence of the United States.

The main battle forces of NATO and the Warsaw Pact faced each other in Europe across the East German Plains, backed up on both sides by tactical nuclear weapons and the implied threat of escalation to an all out thermonuclear exchange. Our western allies as well as our own forward-deployed Army divisions and Air Forces stationed in Europe had to be supplied and reinforced from the United States and 90 percent of that support had to come by sea.

The Kremlin early on recognized that the success of the overall allied strategy depended on our control of the sea. So the modern Russian Navy was conceived, designed, built, and organized to deny the United States Navy this maritime superiority. At the end of World War II, the Russian Fleet had been little more than a coast guard. The Red Navy came a long way in thirty years. By 1970, in total number of warships, the Soviet Fleet vastly outnumbered the U.S. Fleet with their more than a thousand combatants to our less than 400. But the U.S. maintained its naval superiority over the Russians throughout the Cold War. The U.S. Navy had 18 fleet carriers to the Soviets' none. The U.S. carrier force was the measure of difference that allowed the U.S. to sustain the margin of maritime superiority that was essential to the success of our strategy.

Locked in tense confrontation with NATO in central Europe, the Soviet Union sought to gain maneuvering room by a strategy that attempted to turn the flanks. Moscow conspired with their Communist clients to create destabilizing incidents in the regions

of their third world, to incite efforts to overthrow the governments friendly to the west and enlarge the Communist hegemony. Always mindful of the possible escalation to nuclear war, Moscow was careful to avoid overtly engaging American forces with Russian troops. The Kremlin preferred to use surrogates, and equipped them with the most advanced Russian arms and equipment.

The U.S. response to these Communist initiatives was to station carrier task forces in areas accessible to potential trouble spots around the world. During the entire Cold War period the U.S. Navy was able to keep a minimum force of two carriers in the Mediterranean, and three in the west-

ern Pacific and Indian Ocean. These were the regular carrier deployments to the Sixth and Seventh Fleets. The mission of these deployed carrier task forces was to respond immediately to a crisis and resolve the issue in our favor before it escalated into a general war. If the incident did explode into a nuclear conflict the carriers would immediately participate with their onboard nuclear weapons delivered by the nuclear weapon delivery aircraft organic to their embarked air wings.



The AD-4 was created for the Cold War. Ed Heineman designed it for Douglas as primarily a carrier-based nuclear weapons delivery aircraft. This was in response to an urgent require-

ment from the Navy in the early fifties to keep the carriers in the nuclear business. Fortunately, as it occurred, the Skyhawks turned out to be a superior tactical conventional weapons attack plane as well. Fortunately the proposed revolution in nuclear weapons replacing TNT warheads did not come to pass. Carrier magazines would be loaded with tactical nukes, but their employment would only be used as the fleet's contribution to the Single Integrated Operations Plan (SIOP), the Strategic Air Command's (SAC's) OPODER for all-out nuclear war. Still the Skyhawk went into production and was assigned to fleet squadrons in each carrier air wing with the mission of conven-

tional weapons attack, with a nuclear weapons delivery capability contingent upon supporting the SAC or the theater Commanders-in-Chief (CINC) in the case of all-out nuclear war. The aircraft complement of each carrier air wing was programmed to include two fourteen-plane squadrons of Skyhawks to fulfill both the conventional weapons mission and the tactical nuclear bomb delivery role - when authorized by the President.

United State's Cold War posture. Our carriers could deploy around the world, making routine port visits close to the sovereign boundaries of hostile Communist bloc nations, under a simple but supremely effective policy of "neither to confirm nor deny" that our carriers had nuclear weapons in their magazines.

The versatility of the A-4 as a nuclear weapons delivery vehicle and as a conventional tactical bomber at the same time, on the same flight deck, with the same pilots, was a substantive asset to the U.S. Navy's contribution to the

In September of 1958 I was Commanding Officer (CO) of Fighting Squadron 83 based at the Naval Air Station Oceana, VA, when the squadron took delivery of A4D-1 Skyhawks as replacements for our worn out Cutlass fighters, so I became one of the first pilots to fly the Skyhawk in an operational fleet squadron. The plane was relatively small, weighing only 13,000 pounds empty, compared to 50,000 lbs for the Republic F-105, the standard USAF tactical strike aircraft which was also a single-seater. The Skyhawk could carry a payload equal to its own empty weight. The plane tipped the scales at 27,000 lbs loaded with fuel and weapons on the catapult configured for a conventional strike mission. The little bird was fast, having set an international land plane speed record of 695 mph on a closed course in 1958.

My first reaction to the Skyhawk was that the joy of flying had been returned to the pilot. The mission of special weapons delivery required the plane to fly long distances at very low altitudes - below 500 feet - to enable the planes to sneak undetected under an enemy's radar. That was great fun. Previously, low fast flying - known as flat-hatting - was forbidden and was punishable by court martial.

Then there were the low-level aerobatics. The principal method of delivering - the military term for dropping - a nuclear bomb was the loft maneuver, called an "idiot loop" by the pilots. In this technique, the plane approached the target at 300 feet altitude and 450 knots airspeed. When exactly over the desired point of impact, the pilot pulled up into a loop at a centrifugal force of 4 G. After the plane passed through the vertical going straight up, the installed low altitude bomb (LABS) computer released the bomb, which then continued up to 13,000 feet altitude and then fell back down on the target that the pilot had just flown over. After the

continued...

TINKER TOY

Continued...

bomb was released, the pilot completed his pull up maneuver as an Immelman, turning the plane right side up at the top of the loop and diving for the earth to gain maximum speed at a low altitude. The purpose of this maneuver was to allow the airplane and the pilot to escape the blast effects of the nuclear weapon.

These Immelmans were actually low altitude acrobatics which also had been forbidden. It is still a court martial offense for any pilot apprehended conducting acrobatics at low altitude unless on an established bombing range. Now it was not only legal, but practiced hours on end as the primary mode to be used in special weapons attacks by tactical, as opposed to heavy bomber, aircraft.

The Skyhawk's unique design features had attracted much attention, most of it favorable, because they represented a radical and welcome departure from the current trend in military aircraft. It was small, nimble and aerodynamically sound, with no unusual flight characteristics to confuse the pilots. It was simple – one engine, one crewmember, no battery or on board engine starter. Its simplicity attracted a host of nicknames: the bantam bomber, the scooter, the tinker toy. All of them were terms of

endearment from its pilots and gave rise to a number of ditties with which the fighter pilots serenaded the Skyhawk "drivers" at the evening happy hours at the Officer's Club.

Along with the nuclear weapons mission came a major change in VF-83's training and qualifications program. First was the change from Fighting Squadron Eighty-Three (VF-83) to Attack Squadron Eighty-Three (VA-83). Then there was the requirement for all pilots to get a special security clearance for access to some, but not all, of the classified literature covering the bombs we would be carrying. It was explained to the pilots that because of their exposure to capture in the case of being downed over unfriendly territory – a lot of which we would have to cross on our missions – we were not being told too much, no more than the absolute minimum necessary to fly the plane with a thermonuclear weapon attached. The interrogation techniques from behind the iron curtain were known to be harmful to the health.

The pilots of course required technical schooling on these nuclear weapons and on the delivery techniques we would use. This phase was accomplished in an intensive two-week training course in an unadvertised installation of Quonset Huts and barbed wire in a remote part of North Carolina. We were taught in a classroom and frequently examined orally and in written



TONKIN GULF YACHT CLUB

tests. As an incentive for our pilots to hit the books, I decreed that the order of precedence in getting to fly the Skyhawk for the first time would be based upon academic class standing. That was a tangible prize for classroom excellence and the competition was keen. This regime of study was unusual for a group of carrier fighter pilots whose previous judgment of themselves had been based on airmanship, guts and the killer instinct. The enormity of their responsibility was also beginning to weigh on them. Movies of the Bikini A-bomb tests had produced a sobering influence. Finally, with a clean security clearance and good grades in the classroom, each of our pilots received a "certification" to carry a nuclear weapon on an aircraft. But that was not the final exam. The procedure of arming and delivering the weapon would also be part of the "certification" as a nuclear weapon delivery pilot, and earned only on the demonstration of actual flight proficiency in low-level navigation, in-flight refueling and bombing accuracy on an instrumented bombing range.

At Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, the Navy maintained the Leeward Point Air Station and an extensive target complex in the immediate area. The bombing ranges were instrumented, and observers would call out the exact spot of the practice bomb impacts with respect to the bull's eye within ten seconds after the bomb had hit. In the fall of 1956, VA-83 flew to Cuba for a three weeks weapons training deployment for nuclear weapons delivery training and practice.

The deployment to Cuba was the seminal event in the evolution of the Rampagers into a combat ready fleet squadron. The squadron's complement of aircraft was 14 A-4D-1s, and fourteen pilots led by the skipper took off on a bright September morning from the Naval Air Station at Oceana, Virginia (Virginia Beach) and after a snappy



join-up, the 14 Skyhawks flew over the Oceana tower at 450 knots and 500 feet in tight formation and headed SE for a direct flight to the NAS Jacksonville Air Station. After a quick stop at the refueling pits we were off again in formation with destination Cuba. The navigation was pure overwater dead reckoning as the radio aids were all turned off in Cuba. An unwelcome complication for our trip were the giant tropical cumulonimbus (thunderstorms) over the Caribbean that made visual navigation with reference to the land masses difficult and unreliable. The ground maintenance and support people all followed in a Navy four-engined transport. Heavier specialized support equipment was flown down to Leeward NAS by military logistic cargo planes.

The squadron Skyhawks landed at NAS Leeward Point in the mid-afternoon and the pilots were settled into the new surroundings before dinner. The living conditions could not have been more pleasant. The weather was delightfully balmy with a soft

breeze. The Sailors were quartered in new barracks designed and constructed expressly for the tropical environment. The pilots were assigned two to a room in similarly suitable Bachelor Officers Quarters (BOQ) with an officer's dining mess with attached bar next door. The food, prepared by Navy mess stewards with a tropical flourish, was superior.

Bombing practice went on from dawn to dusk every day but Sundays, when the range was shut down to give the spotters and aircraft support crews a day off. The flight schedule was rigorous. Each pilot had two one-hour bombing flights in the morning and two flights in the afternoon. Each bombing flight consisted of eight "idiot loops" pulling a 4G force on each maneuver. At 4G's, the pilot's weight would be as much as 600 lbs. The pilots wore Anti-G suits which employed air bladders on the pilot's legs and stomach to prevent pilot blackout by inflating to apply pressure on the lower body to force the blood to the pilot's brain.

Initially, the pilots bombing accuracy was all over the place. It was

a totally new technique. Having the proper airspeed and altitude flying over the initial point was only the first essential. Then the pilot must pull back smoothly to a four G force and hold that with wings exactly level until the bomb release point. The cockpit display included an accelerometer to indicate G's pulled, and an artificial horizon to monitor wings level. Any deviation from the prescribed values would result in wide misses. In the early sessions, miss distances of 1,000 feet were not unusual. Within a week most pilots had mastered the skill of loft-bombing which we discovered was very much more an art than a science. By compensating his planes trajectory after each bomb spot, the pilots quickly developed a sense of feel for the maneuver and direct hits (bull's eyes) were being scored with some frequency.

The pilots established a rapport with the range crews, and it became a custom for a pilot scoring a bull's eye to reward the range operators with a case

"The morale among the pilots was tops. They were doing what they loved, flying at the limits of their aircraft's performance, and scoring their weapon skills in competition with their squadron mates."

of Cuban beer – an excellent beverage - delivered to the crew's barracks after bombing practice. When a bull's eye was scored, the range radio communicator reported "HATUI", which was the name of the Carib Indian Chief whose profile adorned the label on the Cuban beer. It was considered unseemly to refer to our cases of beer over a VHF tactical radio circuit.

The morale among the pilots was tops. They were doing what they loved, flying at the limits of their aircraft's performance, and scoring their weapon skills in competition with their squadron mates. The miss distance for every bomb dropped by each pilot was recorded on a daily report sheet which was delivered for posting in the bar each night after practice. With the new attack assignment, the squadron's insignia, which was painted on each aircraft and depicted in cloth patches sewn onto the pilot's flight suits, was now a ram's



DOUGLAS A-4 SKYHAWK

head, symbolizing the power of our attack mission. The troops also accepted their squadron nickname as the "Ram-pagers."

Separation from the families had been a concern at first, but it was quickly accepted as a career way of life. It was important that there were no distractions from the pilot's primary duty of qualifying as a nuclear weapons delivery pilot – no doctor's appointments, carpools, or little league games.

In October 1957, VA-83 flew back to our home station, NAS Oceana, all of our pilots certified as qualified "special weapons delivery pilots. A week after the return to NAS Oceana, VA-83

received word that it was the squadron scheduled to deploy in January aboard the USS *Essex* (CVA-9) to the Sixth Fleet in the Mediter-

anean as the special weapons and jet attack squadron in Air Task Group One (ATG-1). It was also suddenly decided by the Navy that because of VA-83's nuclear mission, our aircraft would be equipped with an in-flight refueling capability. This was to increase the A-4's range to reach certain locations on the squadron's nuclear target list. The squadron immediately commenced replacing the A-4D-1 with A-4D-2 models which were equipped with the probe system for in-flight refueling. This change in aircraft model, with the deployment date only three months away meant that the pilots would have to train for and become certified in in-flight refueling with the probe and "drogue" technique, both as a tanker with a 300-gallon "buddy" tank and as a receiver. In this maneuver, the tanker unreels a fuel hose fifty feet long with a funnel-shaped basket device – the drogue - into which the receiving aircraft *continued...*

TINKER TOY

Continued...

inserts his fuel probe which extends about 3 feet ahead of the A-4D's nose. Up to 200 gallons can then be transferred at great pressure, which speeds up the fuel transfer rate to a maximum. In in-flight refueling could become very hairy, especially during air turbulence and at night. All our pilots qualified in just a couple of flights and the maneuver became routine – probably due to the added incentive of avoiding running out of fuel.

Then on 1 January 1958, Attack Squadron 83 flew to Jacksonville NAS and embarked in the USS *Essex*, and deployed to the Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean for a six-month cruise. VA-83's primary role in the Sixth Fleet was special weapons delivery. The squadron's nuclear mission was a component of the Strategic Air Command's (SAC). In the event of general war with the USSR, SAC bombers from British bases, or in airborne orbits over the Atlantic and from SAC air bases in the U.S., would proceed to their targets inside the Soviet Union. This meant the SAC bombers had to over-fly the Warsaw Pact countries of Central Europe where Soviet fighters and surface-to-air missiles were concentrated to intercept these heavy bombardment planes en route to their assigned targets. The Sixth Fleet nuclear delivery squadrons – there were two on each carrier, one jet and one propeller squadron – were responsible for neutralizing these satellite air defense bases with nuclear weapons. The entire elaborate plan was known as the SIOP or "Single Integrated Operations Plan". The nuclear aspect of the SIOP was not specified in its short title.

A typical A-4 target in the "Rollback Campaign" as it was familiarly designated, was a fighter strip in one of the central European Warsaw Pact satellites. The mission flight profile was that after launch from the carrier, to climb to 38,000 feet over the Tyrrhenian Sea and then let down to 500 feet north of the Carpathian Mountains in order to fly into the target area underneath the air defense radar coverage. Flying over the center of his target airdrome, the

pilot would pull up in the "idiot loop" and his bomb, a tactical 300 KT nuclear weapon such as the Mark 28 would be released. After completing the attack, the pilot would fly to a designated spot on the Adriatic coast, trusting the SAC computers at Omaha to have provided him an exit route that kept him clear of a friendly bomber's ground zero.

At this rendezvous point he would expect to find a Navy A2-J Savage twin-engined tanker plane from *Essex* circling as the pilot waited to transfer sufficient fuel to the A-4 bombers to get them back to the carrier. Mission flight planning provided for ten minutes of fuel remaining when a Skyhawk arrived at the Savage rendezvous point.

USS *Essex*, with its embarked aircraft, was scheduled to complete its Sixth Fleet deployment in July of 1958 and return to Norfolk. That was not to be. The CNO, Admiral Arleigh Burke, had foreseen problems in the Middle East and wanted to have naval forces in the theater to provide whatever presence and military capability the national command authority thought appropriate. Therefore when the carrier which was to relieve *Essex* sailed into the Mediterranean, *Essex* simply moved to the eastern Mediterranean should trouble start.

By August of 1958 the political situation in Lebanon was coming to a boil with the possibility of a full-size Middle East conflict unless immediate steps were taken to stabilize the crisis. In a bold move at that time, the U.S. President ordered the Sixth Fleet to land Marines at Beirut in Lebanon under the cover of naval air support from the three carriers. The Marine landings were unopposed and the show of force on the ground and in the air quickly calmed the belligerence among the Arabs, and a major conflagration in the area was preempted.

The Marine landings and the U.S. occupation of Beirut and the strategic areas in Lebanon did provoke a strong and bombastic reaction from the Soviet Union. Within 72 hours after the Marines had hit the beach, Khrushchev made a statement from the Kremlin to the effect that the USSR, "... viewed this American adventuring with alarm and the Soviet Union was very capable of turning the Sixth Fleet aircraft carriers into flaming coffins for the American sailors."



**RAMPAGERS
ATTACK SQUADRON 83**

The response in the Sixth Fleet was immediate. The nuclear capability of the *Essex* was raised to a high state of readiness by the national command authority in Washington. VA-83 positioned two planes on nuclear strike alert on the flight deck. The first A-4 was on the port catapult loaded with a 300-kiloton MK-28 nuclear weapon, the pilot in the cockpit and starting electrical power connected. A Marine with a Tommy Gun stood guard. Behind the port catapult was a second A-4D-2 also loaded with an H-bomb and the pilot standing by ready to go, with his target dossier in hand and his plane pre-flighted. Both of the nuclear ready Skyhawks, loaded with the gleaming silver nuclear bomb, the pilot in the cockpit, the plane on the catapult, and the Marine sentry with a Thompson sub-machine gun could be clearly seen from the shadowing Russian intelligence trawler. That is what was wanted. At the same time, the *Essex* fighters and conventionally armed attack planes were maintaining a constant air presence over Lebanon loaded with bombs and forward firing rockets.

Within a week after the landings, the fiery rhetoric of the Kremlin had subsided and the nuclear bombs were returned to the magazines of the carrier. VA-83 continued flying daily patrols along the borders of Lebanon to detect and dissuade unfriendly Arabs from entering the country.

When the Lebanon situation had cooled off and wound down in late August 1958, the reinforcements deployed for the operation were back-loaded to their home bases and *Essex* with VA-83 aboard was finally headed for home. But before the carrier could reach Gibraltar, Admiral Burke ordered our carrier and air wing through the Suez Canal, then to proceed to the Taiwan Straits where the Chinese were shelling two Taiwan affiliated islands, Kemoy

SKYHAWK STUDY GROUP

• Research Assignment •

Question: On the Skyhawk Study Group site this question was posed:
Why does the J-65 engine vent oil overboard through vents over each wing?



Tommy Thomasson offered:

From my draft manuscript: One unusual feature of the Sapphire was that, whereas the front bearing and accessory gearbox were part of a closed-loop lubrication system, the center and rear bearings of the engine were each lubricated with about one-half pint of oil per hour which was then dumped overboard, a so-called “total loss” flow. The two oil vents were located on the upper right side and the lower left side of the mid fuselage, resulting in a slippery surface on the inboard wing section.

T
<http://tommythomason.com/>

Ed. note: A very interesting discussion followed, which we'll share after you have a chance to put your two-cents worth into the discussion. Does anyone know why the J-65 was designed that way?

TRIBUTE TO THE TINKER TOY continued

→ and Matsu, in an apparent preparation for invasion. *Essex* arrived on station in September to join six other U.S. fleet carriers in the Taiwan Straits. All of the carriers carried squadrons of nuclear weapons capable aircraft and although the U.S. made no threats, the press did not hesitate to make note of this nuclear presence. The carriers had orders to actively exercise their tactical aircraft so the sorties conducted maneuvers inside the China claimed territorial waters, but not closer than the U.S. criteria, that territorial waters extended 3 miles from the shoreline.

Obviously awed by this raw show of force in their own sovereign waters, the Chinese, shortly after the arrival of the *Essex*, an Atlantic Fleet carrier, announced that the U.S. must have misunderstood the Chinese intentions, and all aggressive activities toward Taiwan would cease. The Pacific Fleet carriers returned to routine Seventh Fleet operations and then in November of 1958, *Essex*, with VA-83 embarked, was finally ordered home to Jacksonville, FL via the Straits of Malacca, the Indian Ocean and with port visits to Capetown and Rio de Janeiro. It was my longest

six-month's deployment since WWII.

By then the A-4 had become one of the most representative symbols of the U.S. Navy's involvement in the Cold War. Flying from carriers and land bases, piloted by naval officers and Marines, this versatile little scrapper exemplified the compact capabilities of the Navy's carriers themselves. Capable of the whole spectrum of warfare during that grim forty year confrontation of the Cold War, the Skyhawk flew day and night from the carrier in a variety of roles, from a persuasive deterrent to thermonuclear war, to the intense American air offensives against North Vietnam in the relentless series of air campaigns that eventually forced Hanoi to sue for peace.

The Skyhawk established its long and distinguished combat career as a tactical strike aircraft for the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps in the Vietnam War at the very onset. The initial U.S. military action in Vietnam was the 64-plane strike by two carriers, USS *Constellation* and USS *Ticonderoga* on August 5, 1964, against the North Vietnamese naval base at Than Hoa, ordered by President Johnson in retaliation for the Gulf

of Tonkin incident. Two A-4's were lost in the attack. One pilot was killed and the other, Ensign Everett Alverez was taken prisoner to become the longest incarcerated POW in the Vietnam War.

About the author:

Admiral Holloway's long and distinguished career included service in World War II and Korea. His first exposure to the “Tinker Toy” came during his tour as Commanding Officer of VA-83 operating from the decks of USS *Essex* in support of the 1958 Marine landings in Lebanon. Later, in command of USS *Enterprise* from 1965 to 1967, he was intimately involved in support of A-4 operations in North Vietnam. After assuming flag rank, Admiral Holloway participated at the highest levels in the development and execution of U.S. Cold War strategy, ultimately serving as Chief of Naval Operations from 1974 to 1978. He served as acting Chairman of the JCS under President Ford.

A complete biography can be found at http://www.history.navy.mil/bios/holloway_j.htm.

SKYHAWKS OVER OSHKOSH

• Airventure 2010 •

By Mark Williams

It's been a long time since Skyhawk fans have had the opportunity to see two immaculately restored A-4s performing together in an air show at the same time. However, those lucky enough to attend Airventure 2010 this summer had that treat. The two restored A-4s, one belonging to the Warbird Heritage Foundation of Waukegan, Illinois, and the other operated by the Collings Foundation of Stow, Massachusetts, performed almost daily with a variety of other war birds, including the F-4D "Rhino" of the Collings Foundation.

The Warbird Heritage Museum's Skyhawk is an A-4B, bureau number 142112, although it is painted to look like A-4C 148609 (NP-685) which was flown by LCDR T.R. Swartz on May 1, 1967, when he bagged a MIG-17, gaining the only air-to-air victory by an A-4 pilot during the Vietnam war. According to David Staffeldt of WHF maintenance in a post on the Skyhawk Study Group blog, this aircraft was originally restored for Combat Jets by Unlimiteds Limited of California in 1989. It was donated to the Experimental Aircraft



Skyhawk directors Mike "Buick" Eberhardt and Mark "Senator" Williams relax in Collings Foundation tent at Oshkosh. Collings F-4D "Rhino" is shown in background.

(Photo courtesy of Ken Crist)

Association in 1992, where it became a static display due to the high costs of operation. Although EAA preserved the aircraft and stored it inside, returning it to an airworthy status was a major project.

142112 began its active-duty career in 1957 with the Wake Island Avengers



Close-up of WHF NP 685. Red star indicating the MIG kill by T.R. Swartz is clearly visible above the name plate. (Photo courtesy of Mark Williams)

of VMA-211 stationed at MCAS Edenton, NC. It later served with VMAs - 224, -225, -242, -533, plus the Marine and Navy reserves, and made a cruise aboard *Intrepid* with VSF-3 in 1966. After service with various VC squadrons, it was stricken from the USN rolls in February 1970.

As 142112 was restored, it was fitted with a Charlie nose off of A-4C 148500. The restored aircraft was rolled out under its own power at Airventure 2009 where T.R. and his wife Bernadine were present to share their memories. It was flown for the first time after this restoration on December 1, 2009, by Skyhawk Association member Sid Snedeker (see cover, *The A-4Ever*, Spring 2010).

The Oshkosh shows were flown by SA member Paul Wood, founder of the Warbird Heritage Foundation. More information and some great photos are available at: www.warbirdheritage-foundation.org.

The Collings Foundation TA-4J 153524 was returned to flight after an extensive restoration on December 15, 2004, at Myrtle Beach, SC, with Captain Bert Zeller USNR at the controls. During its active career, 153524 served in the adversary role with the VF-126 Bandits at Miramar and with the National Parachute Test Range at NAF El Centro as a test platform before its

continued...



Gear down, hook down - all we need is a boat! (Photo courtesy of Ken Crist)



Two A-4s in their natural habitat - at 6 o'clock behind an F-4. (Photo courtesy of Ken Crist)



Collings TA-4F TM-08 taxis by with Buick Eberhardt waving from the back seat. (Photo courtesy of Ken Crist)

OSHKOSH

Continued...

final assignment to the Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River, Maryland. At Pax River the aircraft was assigned to Weapons Test and used for student training in the Naval Test Pilot School syllabus until transferred to AMARC Tucson in August 1994

The Collings Foundation painted TA-4J 153524 as TM-08, a Marine Fast Forward Air Control (Fast FAC) TA-4F aircraft operated by the Playboys of Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron Eleven (H&MS-11) from DaNang Air Base, Vietnam, during the period January 1969 to September 14, 1970. 57 pilots earned designation as Playboy FACs during that period, several of whom are members of Skyhawk Association. For more information on the Playboy mission, see *"Who Were Those Guys, the Playboys in Vietnam,"* by Col. Larry Adkinson, *The A-4Ever*, Winter 2005.

Since completing the restoration of 153524, Collings Foundation has oper-



Paul Wood mans Warbird Heritage Foundation's NP 685. (Photo courtesy of Ken Crist)

ated it regularly as part of the foundation's Vietnam Memorial Flight, which includes the foundation's F-4D Phantom and UH-1E Huey. More information on the aircraft and its schedule can

be found at www.collingsfoundation.org. Collings offers rides in both the TA-4 and F-4D for those with pockets deep enough to join the club (see sidebar on opposite page).



TM 08 rotating for takeoff. (Photo courtesy of Ken Crist)

For the Oshkosh 2010 air shows TM-08 was piloted by Jared Isaacman, a member of Skyhawk Association, and association director Mike "Buick" Eberhardt flew from the back-seat. Both the TA-4 and F-4D are kept at Ellington Field, Houston, and Buick reports that he and Jared picked up TM-08 at New Orleans Lakefront where it was being used as a backdrop (along with the F-4D and the Collings T-2B) in the filming of "The Green Lantern" movie. After a stop in Memphis they flew into OSH for a week of air shows.

These lucky guys are proving that the slogan "A-4s Forever" wasn't just an idle boast. As Buick says, "It's a dirty job, but someone has to do it."

Besides these photos of the two Skyhawks in action, the WHF website has a great collection of photos (see www.warbirdheritagefoundation.org). At press time this website had an excellent video of the Oshkosh Salute to Veteran's air show: <http://marcbrecy.perso.neuf.fr/Oshkosh.html>.

Both the Warbird Heritage Foundation and Collings Foundation are 501(c)(3) nonprofit charities which gladly accept donations in support of their missions. See their websites for details on how you can contribute.

Ed. note: Remember how we used to say that we'd pay the government, if necessary, for the privilege of flying the A-4? Now's your chance!

Breaking News: Collings Foundation receives FAA flight exemption allowing rides in the F-4 Phantom and A-4 Skyhawk

In honor of our Vietnam Veterans ~ This once in a lifetime opportunity allows anyone to directly experience the most important jet fighters of the Vietnam/Cold War era!

"This is a ground breaking program that allows participants to experience these aircraft from the best possible position – the cockpit! This is the ultimate flight experience. The F-4

Phantom is massive, powerful, fast and loud. Its two General Electric J-79 engines produce over 35,000 pounds of thrust, capable of propelling the fighter to over twice the speed of sound. Joining the Vietnam Memorial flight training program is the world renowned A-4 Skyhawk. The Skyhawk, or Scooter, as it was affectionately referred to, is an incredibly nimble attack aircraft that was flown by pilots such as Senator John McCain during the Vietnam War. Both aircraft provide a lesson in aviation history you will never forget!" says Rob Collings.

The F-4 and A-4 Flight Programs take place at the Collings Foundation's Houston, Texas campus. Each participant will take part in academic sessions on the aircraft, including safety procedures, ejection seat training and cockpit orientation, before donning a flight-suit and strapping into one of the most powerful civilian-operated fighters in the world. Then the participants experience what has for so long been reserved solely for the elite fighter pilots!

Flights will be available starting in September. Now accepting reservations. Call 800.568.8924 or visit www.collingsfoundation.org. Cost: F-4 Phantom \$12,500, A-4 Skyhawk \$7,800.



Go Ahead, Give A Guy A Gift

Got a buddy who tries to leave with your copy of the A-4Ever? Got a pal who flew the Scooter but never reads about its illustrious history? Got women around you that think you're making up all those war stories and flying tales? Got kids who ask what you did in the war, daddy?

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PURESOME UNPLUGGED

• YP's Excellent Adventures •

By Jack "Puresome" Woodul

~ Rocket in the Rain ~

From the steps of the hotel, he could see the rocket. It was just where they told him it would be, its tip sticking up above the trees beyond an unkempt Moscow park. The light mist made its sun-faded green paint looking even duller, but it had not lost any of its menace. Puresome pulled up the collar of his jacket and started walking towards it. Even though there were no KGB operatives assigned to follow him, like they used to follow his former Pan American crewmembers, he still had to look back to be sure.

For as long as he could remember, the Commies had been there, cold people with stainless steel teeth, marching in bayoneted phalanxes through Red Square, comrades with History, off to bury capitalism. Comic books showed commissars with shaved heads, lurking about in leather coats and smoking small black cigars made from truck tires, downing endless shots of vodka while they plotted the downfall of America. Their leaders had banged shoes on the august tables of the United Nations and nudged the coming of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat along with military hardware and advisors in lots of nasty little wars. Puresome had learned to "tuck and roll" under his school desk in case Premier Kisseff actually decided to nuke the grain elevator in metropolitan Portales, and perhaps, he thought, this missile was one of those that got shipped back from Cuba. The Hunters fought with a Roosky Casey Jones and his honcho pals over the Yalu, and many senior Naval Aviators he knew wore gongs from that Police Action. The MIG's, SAM's, and flak that Puresome faced in the Late Unpleasantness in Southeast Asia certainly had not been provided by Switzerland. But, in the end, it had all cost too much, and the Evil Empire had gone away with only the occasional bang and the odd whimper.

Now those swept-wing, manly jets Puresome had flown that had avoided being parked in the Arizona sun were stuck on sticks in front of Naval Air

Stations or shining in Warbird museums. Youthly had been replaced by Captain Mitty Puresome, who wore his heavily brocaded cap down over one cold, grey eye, programmed his Heavy Jet across the pond to exotic places, and dreamed of reheats. Inevitably, given the state of his airline juniority, flights to Moscow in the chillier months showed up on his "things to do" list.

"Maybe the KGB or SMERSH will have mis-filed my dossier, and I won't get abducted and brain-washed into assassinating the CEO of Consolidated-Vultee at the phone command of my Ol' Granny, who had been secretly turned by Leon Trotsky, back in the Thirties....." Puresome certainly wasn't paranoid that Commies wanted to kill him because they used to shoot at his madly jinking Scooter, but he kept it in mind. He studied up on how to use meters instead of feet for flight levels, and how to navigate across the Great Cold Places to Moscow's Nicolai Ivonovitch Lobachefski International Airport.

It turned out to be not a big deal, except for the compacting of Youthly's

beautocks during the ten-hour flight. It did take all three flight crewmembers, listening hard and taking notes, to decipher the Automated Terminal Weather broadcasts, which was read with a Russian accent of great thickness. Even though it was suspected that some of the navigational aids were, slyly, not exactly where the Russians said they were, the magic boxes in Youthly's airliner sought out the airport and they landed without fanfare or fireworks. In fact, NIL International Airport was much like any other, except for the pack of dogs that chased across the ramp after airliner jetsam that was being blown toward the perimeter fence by a transversely mounted jet engine on a flatbed truck. "We should have thought about that back in the NAV, instead of doing all those FOD (Foreign Object Damage) walk downs of the ramp after quarters every morning," Puresome thought.

After deplaning, Puresome and his crew had to wait to follow an Aeroflot flight crew through security. The Russians had been to a far, far away country, and they had scored some impressive souvenirs, like truck tires and bundles of long, florescent light tubes, which were taking some time to pass through all the custom officials scrutinizing and passports and visas stamping. The security area was definitely not decked out like a fern bar, and the officials, with their big, Frisbee-top hats, uniforms, and grim expressions, brought visions of elec-



trode-to-scrote applications. But, unlike some of the flight attendants, who were carrying in lots of Levi Blue Jeans to sell on the black market, the only thing Puresome had to fear was fear itself, and he passed through with a nominal number of scowls.

Mother Russia was not yet a winter wonderland, but was stuck in the October drizzlies. The driver of the crew bus pointed out a giant, anti-tank obstacle left over from the Great Patriotic War that marked the closest the Nazis had come to Moscow, but, otherwise, the scenery was uniformly gray and grim. Visions of prancing off to the Bolshoi, or scoring some bottles of high-grade-rocket-fuel vodka faded to the customary jet lag need for some time in the hammock. After checking in at the hotel, it was agreed that the First Officer and some of the flight attendants would show FNG Capitano Puresome the obligatory sights later on in the day. The relief pilot refused to leave the hotel, convinced that he would glow from eating Chernobyl Chicken in some dive or be abducted by the Russian Mafia, to be tortured and held for ransom. Youthly thought he had a point.

It was a good thing that Puresome had a senior-mama Lead Elephant for the migration to Red Square, because he awoke from his nap truly lost in space. A shower and some scraping left him somewhat better for wear, but he was grateful when their small party set off from the hotel and actually found a subway station. The Lead Elephant had brought along a sack of small coins that looked like various sized washers, and about four hundred of them, amounting to some thirty-seven cents, bought five people a ride to the station closest to their destination. Since the only Russian Youthly knew was "Stolichnaya," he hadn't a clue, since none of the signs said that. Still, they all boarded a subway train that clattered them along in what the Lead Elephant assured him was the proper direction. Perhaps Puresome's black roper cowboy boots and decidedly foreign get-up put the local passengers off their digestion. They were heavily bundled in dark, quietly fuming clothes, and they seemed to be trying to work through a gnarly chess problem or were suffering from bad borscht. Nobody, not even the children, was permitted a smile in the presence of an obvious Foreign

Lackey Libertine Bastid, and Puresome was sorely tempted to do the Chicken Dance and make weird faces to see if anyone's lip might curl.

They emerged from the underground and strolled along. Puresome was being nattered at by one of the veteran flight attendants when they passed by what looked like a refrigerator that had been hand-painted green. In its front, there was a small niche with a glass sitting in it, and there was a slot for kopeks or different sized washers. Puresome could only imagine what fluid might be expelled into the communal glass, but, having contracted a rather pesky gastrointestinal disorder from drinking orange juice from a communal glass in Mexico, decided to let it pass as local color. Further on, as they passed into Red Square, there was the famous GUM department store, where there must have been a sale on radiator caps, because there was a long line queued up out the door.

Red Square didn't look quite right without formations of T-34 tanks, ICBM's on trailers, and masses of men marching through it. Lenin was having his anti-freeze replaced, so his tomb was closed. But the colorful onion tops of St. Basil's church looked just as they should, as did the walls of the Kremlin, and Youthly put his "X's" in those boxes.

They wandered down Arbat Street, where nascent capitalism was aborning. Puppies, whole armies of the stacked Matryoshka Dolls, night-vision goggles, and lots of stuff with the Red Star on it were for sale on long tables. Puresome made a Russian's day, when, after some intense, incoherent bargaining, he bought about a hundred ornate badges on a cloth display for ten dollars, American. By this time, Youthly's fun meter was pegged out, and it was time to get to the hotel before dark. After more haggling, taxi's were arranged and dispatched to the hotel. Little old babushka grannies were sweeping leaves from the median of the broad *prospect* as they drove, and Puresome understood that all the rubles for all those years went into Sputniks and Foxbats, certainly not into infrastructure. For a place that was recently a super power, Russia sure looked like, if not a full Third World Country, at least a firm two-point two-five. "But, you know," Puresome reflected as they bounced along, "maybe if Los Estados Unidos had lost some

twenty-seven million soldiers and civilians to the tender ministrations of the Wermacht during the Great Patriotic War and had lots of the Worker's Paradise shot up and mashed under Panzer treads, we might be a lot grimmer and concentrate on not letting it happen again."

As they went in the lobby of the hotel, the First Officer asked Puresome, "Hey, did you see the ICBM sticking up over by the park outside?" Puresome, whose feet hurt and beer low-level light was on, had not. "Well, there is a military museum over there with lots of stuff. You can just walk over." Puresome had heard about the museum from other chaps, and he resolved to have a look, certainly after cold beer and a good night's sleep.

Puresome walked along the path worn through the patchy grass under the trees of the park. Eventually, he came to a bunch of rat shacks, and he passed through them in the direction of the rocket. He scrunched up his shoulders, expecting a burst of AK-47 fire from his six o'clock at any second. But nobody was around, and suddenly he was in the middle of a vast array of Soviet military might, dominated by the high altar of the looming ICBM.

Immediately around him were a MIG-17 and a MIG-21. There was a SAM-2 on its launcher. There were other aircraft, missiles, anti-aircraft cannon, and many tanks. All looked a little sad and dilapidated, sitting on weedy grass in a light rain. Puresome was lost in memory of what these fearsome weapons meant to him for so long. Now they were drooping and wet in a forgotten park, and Youthly was an airline puke, a tourist, just as wet in the same park. The world had changed, and Evil, which abhors a vacuum, had shifted to other climes, and younger warriors wielded newer, shinier weapons.

But Puresome knew where the SAM's of yesteryear were. Certainly, they were not here, rusting away on forgotten display. But, anytime he cared remember, all these weapons were alive, and vital, and deadly, just as he was, forever Youthly, forever joyous in battle.

As he walked back to the hotel, he reflected what a comfort that was.



READ? YOU THINK WE READ?

U.S. Marine Corps Aviation Since 1912. (Fourth Edition)

Author: Peter B. Mersky

Publisher: Naval Institute press, 2009

375 pages, Appendices, Glossary, Notes, Index, Photos

Reviewed by Diej "Primo" Kiely, Editor Emeritus, MCAA Yellow Sheet

Not one to let things pass him by, Peter Mersky has provided yet another edition of his excellent history of Marine Corps Aviation. Redone in a very attractive coffee table size, the detailed history is replete with photos, notes, and appendices containing vital statistics, along with a glossary and index, all that making for not only enjoyable reading but as a ready reference.

Beginning with Lieutenant Alfred A. Cunningham's arrival at Annapolis for flight training to the operational deployment of the MV-22, introduction of the F-35B and the advent of UAVs, Mersky takes the reader through almost one hundred years of progress, often frustrated by meager appropriations and resistance to change, but elevated by sacrifice, dedication and great courage. Experience in World War I, Haiti, Nicaragua and Guam challenged Marines' resourcefulness, producing advances in equipment and tactics, making the airplane a more effective weapon especially in providing support for ground troops. Lawson Sanderson

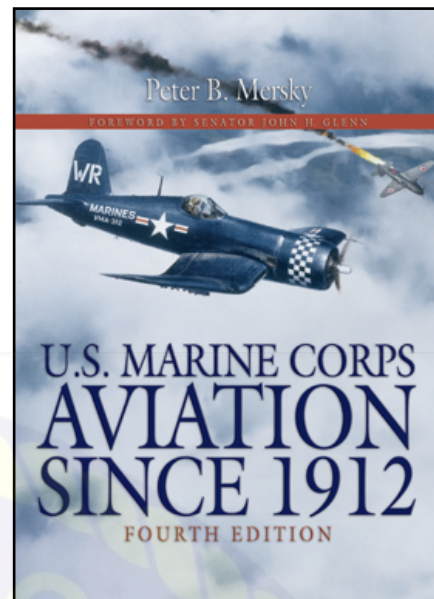
and Ross Rowell were early advocates of what was to become dive or glide bombing, an essential to effective close air support.

In size and scope, Marine Air reached its pinnacle during World War II, its crowning achievement the spectacular performance of Roy Geiger's Cactus Air Force on Guadalcanal. As America went on the offensive in the Pacific, Marine Air became involved in almost every aspect of the air effort in the theater; from MAG-25 came SCAT, a sprawling network of air transport support that ranged the entire South Pacific area, Marine PBJs (B-25s) pro-

"Beginning with Lieutenant Alfred A. Cunningham's arrival at Annapolis for flight training to the operational deployment of the MV-22, introduction of the F-35B and the advent of UAVs, Mersky takes the reader through almost one hundred years of progress..."

vided bombing and heckler missions throughout the Bismarks, Solomons and later, the Philippines, VMDs 154 and 254 provided photographic reconnaissance, and Marine Corsairs moved from shore bases to sea as the Japanese concentrated their kamikaze attacks on US carriers. By war's end, Marine Air had reached full maturity and became the model for the future of the Corps' air arm.

Mersky takes us through Korea and the advent of helicopter operations leading to the concept of Vertical Envelopment, used to great effect in Vietnam, and the introduction of the AV-8 Harrier, a whole new dynamic in tactical aviation.



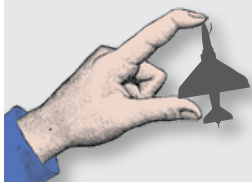
The Fourth Edition brings Marine Air to the present, covering the Gulf War, Bosnia, Iraqi Freedom, Afghanistan and the War on Terror, the entire effort encompassing very nearly a century of accomplishment.

Peter Mersky has, very appropriately, dedicated this edition to the memory of the late Lieutenant General Tom Miller, a fighter pilot, test pilot, and leader at every level in the Corps. The Foreword by Senator John Glenn salutes his close friend and former squadronmate. The release of this edition coincided very nicely with the enshrinement of Lieutenant General Miller in the National Naval Aviation Museum's Hall of Honor in May of this year.

For a concise, complete history of Marine Air, Peter Mersky's stylish, informative and entertaining read is a must for your bookshelf.

Primo

[Ed. note: This review was published in the Summer '10 quarterly edition, The Yellow Sheet. Used with permission]



SIZE DOES MATTER

• Modelers' Corner •

By Joe Turpen



Our featured model this issue is this beautiful TA-4J adversary bird in VC-8 markings by Steve Longacre. Steve worked on this beauty from December 2008 to May 2010, trying a bunch of new techniques and by his account, learning a lot in the process. Those techniques were:

- 1) vinyl masks for some of the decals
- 2) sanding the canopy down, then masking the frame and repainting
- 3) building an interior canopy frame using locator pins
- 3) using a resin cockpit
- 5) use of Legos to square up the landing gear
- 6) masking the camo with Blu Tac
- 7) lightly sanding through the three layers of paint on the boarding ladder to weather it

Visit www.a4model.a4skyhawk.org/models/modelers.htm

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For TAPS lists, members may access these links:
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TAPS notices may be sent to Bob Hickerson, Newsletter Editor at sa-journal-editor@a4skyhawk.org or mail to Bob Hickerson, 1222 Balcones Drive, Fredericksburg, TX 78624.



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