



THE SKYHAWK ASSOCIATION

Journal



A-4M 160264, the last production Skyhawk.

THE A-4 EVER

Fall 2012 EXTRA

Skyhawk Association

VOLUME 18 • NUMBER 3

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Skyhawk Association Annual Meeting

September 7, 2012

Sparks, NV



www.a4skyhawk.org

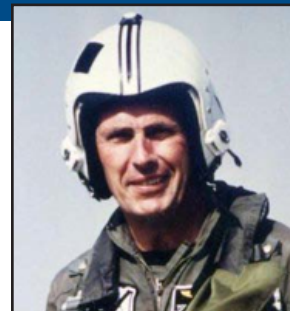


THE PREZ SEZ

• From the Hun •



By Todd Frommelt



Todd "The Hun" Frommelt

Good electronic day,

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Association! Is this exciting or what! An electronic version of the world renowned Association "Journal". Not that we can expect this 4th issue every year, but Raven and Stephanie are sure giving it a try! As with any 'first', we sure want your comments and suggestions....so fire away!

This Raven deadline for Journal articles and a Prez Sez is a bit early but actually is coming at a good time for me. I was getting ready to issue my last "between the Journals" email newsletter as President, so my outline was forming even before I got the note. Ah yes, that word 'last' might raise some eyebrows...but it's true. I'm coming to the end of two years already! It's flown by for me, and I have to admit I'm looking forward to some extra free time after this year's Tailhook and the Board and Annual meetings. But while this has been one of the more demanding 'volunteer' assignments I've had, it's also been one of the more rewarding. A large majority of that reward comes from two years of entertaining, educational and enlightening (I love it when humorous alliteration works!) contact with you folks! While I knew that we were all the same light attack breed, the burst of renewed Skyhawk camaraderie that (my perception) a Prez gets to experience like no others was just plain shit-hot. Sorry ladies. But it has made this job a distinct pleasure, and I thank you. On to some good stuff!

Tailhook, 6-9 September! If Raven and Stephanie stick to schedule, admittedly a long shot on this, their first "electronic" edition, we should have this in your hot email box in time for you to get your butts (sweet butts for the ladies) over to Reno next weekend! It's the last of the centennials that we'll partake of, so let's make it a super showing! Our luncheon is Friday Noon followed by our Annual Meeting. We've got a super guest of honor, Marine MajGen (Ret) Jon "Goose" Gallinetti, who's sure to make it a memorable luncheon! Call Mark Williams (425-771-2030) or email him at (roger.wilco@comcast.net) to sign up pronto! Check with one of the Board members for details if you'd like to join us at our regular Board meeting early that same morning! While on that topic; there are always



MajGen (Ret) Gallinetti (You can visit the "Goose" at the Rolls Royce booth at Hook too!)

several members of the Board reaching the end of their three-year "tour" of duty. This year they're Gene Atwell, George Blosser, Peter Cole and Mark Williams. First, thanks gentlemen for a super three years! Second, they've all agreed to stay on for another three years, if the Membership so desires, and lastly, please be reminded that we're always looking for nominations from the floor at our Annual Meeting. Please let us know, as well, if you have any agenda items you'd like us to consider! Your participation is sincerely encouraged!

Membership: OK, we're still in that mid climb stall here guys and gals (at least we were when I wrote this)! Just over 900 and we're stopped in our tracks! One quarter to go to make it to 1000 members by the end of the year. Give it a good shot for me if you would, dozo! Check out your old cruise books, email address lists (your book and **your buddies email headers!**), and the foggy memory banks! We can do this...

For example, one of our French members, Franck Bellucci, knew we were trying to get in touch with the Singapore 150 Training Squadron in Cazaux AB, France. He was able to smoothly get aboard the base, got some photos, and even got me an email address! While they're not saying much yet, at least we now have a foot in the door! Way to go Franck! Thanks much! Here's Franck (cream sweats) and some 150 Squadron A-4SU's!...



continued on page 5...



IN MEMORY OF
M. DAVIS "WHIZZER" WHITE, D.D.S
(1939-2007)
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BOMBS AWAY!

• Fall 2012 Extra •



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———— Published by the Skyhawk Association © 2012 ————

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-4M 160264, the last production Skyhawk, shown with original paint job circa June 1979.
Reprint of Fall 2004 cover, The A-4Ever. U.S. Navy photo.

THE PREZ SEZ MORE...

Continued from page 2...

Last A-4 off the McDonnell Douglas production line restored! That's right, 160264 was unveiled at The Flying Leatherneck Museum at MCAS Miramar on July 21st...and she's a beauty! It was done with special formula house paint, and we're hoping it'll last a while...because it looks just spectacular! General "Thunder" Butcher conducted the ceremony, and I was sure happy to be there with a good crowd of Skyhawk Association and Marine A-4 types. Thanks for all your support!



New SDO's! That's right, we've got two new SDO's signed up for outfits not previously covered by our guidon bearers! First, a warm combination of "Welcome Aboard" and our sincere thanks for volunteering! We have Ken Angst going to work as the VC-13 SDO (kenangst@cccomm.net) and Ron 'Banty' Marron for the VA-95 Green Hornets (rondebmar@comcast.net)! Thank you gentlemen! Now for the membership: If you've ever been a member of these fine outfits, or know someone who has, **please contact these new SDO's ASAP** and get them started on some good squadron rosters! Thanks for your help! On another SDO topic, I've talked with Stan Martin, our on "sick leave" SDO Coordinator, and am happy to report he is slowly but surely recovering well! He looks forward to getting his electronic devices back in play shortly. Way to go Stan!

Draken International and A-4's Still Flying Update: It's now official! Draken International will, indeed, be operating 8 restored Kiwi A-4K's sometime late in the first quarter of 2013! And right now, they're running 3 of Bob Schneider's A-4L's. They're looking for A-4 maintainers **NOW**, so if you are one or know one, get in touch with (jkerby@drakenintl.com). Interested pilots may want to send pilot resumes to Draken International at 3330 Flightline Drive Lakeland, FL 33811. They're keeping good ones on file for now... I'm upping the Still Flying estimate to 101 1/2 Skyhawks! We could hit 110 actives before the Israeli's start to mothball their fleet in 2014.

Oshkosh A-4's: Did someone say there were A-4's at Oshkosh this year? Yep, you read that right...PLURAL! Both Paul Woods (Warbird Heritage Foundation) and the Carr/Spangler Skyhawk Ventures birds were on display and flying. You know what that means...Hide and Bear were there to take pictures for us! Thanks to the owners for keeping those birds flying and to Hide and Bear for documenting the affair! (See photo essay from Dave Dollarhide in this issue.)



VA Loan Guarantees: Here's an item sent in by one of my old Marine buddies that I thought I'd put out there just in case...VA Loan Guaranty Service spoke at one of the workshops I attended in D.C. last week. They said Loan Guaranty would assist any veteran with a home loan that is in danger of foreclosure. That includes non-VA home loans, i.e., FHA or commercial loans. Of course, they'd be limited in the assistance they could offer but would help vet's discuss their options with their lender. The presenter said often times veterans are reluctant to call the lender and let them know they are in financial trouble for fear it may accelerate the foreclosure process. A call might delay or even avoid foreclosure altogether if done soon enough (877-827-3702).

Tucson Navy/Marine Reserve Center Restoration: Here comes our next restoration project! It's one of the very last TA-4's to have flown for the Navy with VC-8, so it's also a heritage bird. If you're in the Tucson area, they'd love to have you volunteer to help clean it up! POC's are Col. Don R. "HOOT" Duffer, USMC (ret) at (exa4jock@aol.com) and CDR Ross "Rusty" Orvik, USN at (Ross.Orvik@Navy.mil).

Wrap Up: It's been both a blast and a distinct privilege to work for all of you these past two years! I have learned a lot, made lots of great new acquaintances, experienced some super times and fantastic opportunities, hopefully got some good work done and now look forward to my continued work on the Board as a director. I know Hide (Dave Dollarhide) will be a super President and think the Board was smart to initiate our two year rotation for the job between the Navy and Marine VP's. It is a bit busy and getting new blood flowing at the two year mark should prove just perfect! Again, thanks for the opportunity to serve! It's been a pleasure. Over to you Hide....

Hun sends

R.G.'s ART

• A-4 MiG Victory •



R. G. Smith,
(1914-2001)
Named Honorary Naval
Aviator Number 11.

LCDR T.R. Swartz bags a MiG-17 with a 5" ZUNI air-to-ground rocket. Swartz was a pilot with VA-76 aboard USS *Bon Homme Richard* when he flew the mission on May 1, 1967.

Image courtesy of
Sharlyn Marsh.
[rgsmithart.com]



FROM THE EDITOR

• Fall 2012 Extra •

By Bob "Raven" Hickerson

This issue of *The A-4Ever* represents a milestone of sorts. For several years, the board of the Skyhawk Association has discussed the possibility of distributing some of our publications by electronic means, and in fact, we've provided our international members the option to receive only digital copies of the Skyhawk Association Journal for some time. With this issue, we're testing that option for our general membership.

I'm sure that all of our members are aware of the general trend towards personal, electronic delivery of media that in the past have been distributed in print only. Just this week I received a magazine to which I have subscribed for years. The plastic wrapper contained a label announcing that the current issue would be the last printed, and that all subscriptions were being migrated to mobile apps. This move was taken with little notice.

There are several reasons for this trend, but the most important is cost. The cost of printing and mailing *The A-4Ever* is substantial and rising, and cost was the primary reason we decreased our number of issues per year from four to three some years back. Unfortunately, the costs of printing and distribution will continue to rise.

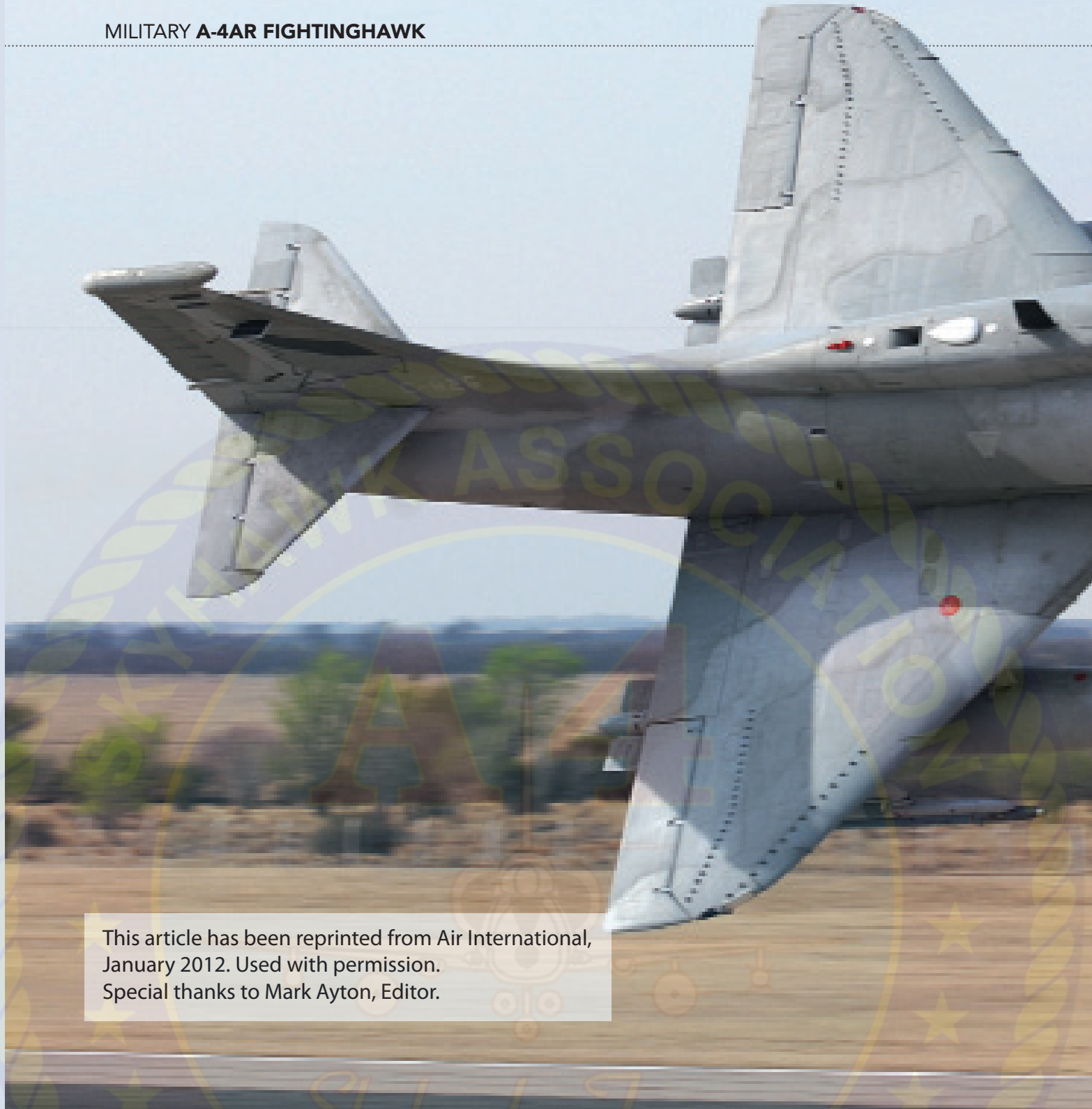
This extra issue of the Association Journal is a way of testing the waters to determine if electronic distribution could work for the majority of our members. Let me emphasize that we are not contemplating an end to printing and mailing *The A-4Ever*. We will continue to produce and mail three issues per year for the foreseeable future. However, if enough members can be reached through electronic delivery, we may be able to provide a fourth issue of the Journal each year, at a low marginal cost. In the future, increased use of electronic delivery may be possible.

In order to evaluate this effort, we've created a survey which can be accessed at this (<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LSVX8KY>). Please take a minute to click on the link and complete our survey. If you'd rather respond by email, just drop me a note at (sajournal-editor@a4skyhawk.org). Let me know how you feel about electronic delivery.

And while I've got your attention, let me make a plug for submission of stories and pictures by our members. The only reason we have *The A-4Ever* is because some of our members take time to submit letters, photos and stories for publication. If you've got an idea for a story, put it on paper and send it to me at the email address above. Don't worry about the format, grammar or spelling. We promise not to mark it up with red pencil like your 8th grade English teacher. We can help you polish the story, but we don't have the time or knowledge necessary to write a story from scratch about something that happened in your squadron.

Keep those cards and letters coming, and let me know what you think of this new initiative.

Raven



This article has been reprinted from Air International, January 2012. Used with permission. Special thanks to Mark Ayton, Editor.

On October 31, 1966, the first 12 Douglas A-4B Skyhawks, from a total of 50, were delivered to the Argentine Air Force, or Fuerza Aérea Argentina (FAA). They formed two squadrons of the new Grupo 4 de Caza Bombardeo, which in 1975 became the Grupo 5 de Caza of the V Brigada Aérea, at BAM Villa Reynolds, in San Luis Province. The Skyhawks were the first

aircraft in Argentine service with an in-flight refuelling capability, although no tankers were available until 1978, when two Lockheed KC-130H Hercules were delivered.

Also in 1975, Grupo 4 de Caza of IV Brigada Aérea at BAM Mendoza received 25 A-4Cs to replace its veteran North American F-86F Sabres.

Skyhawk Combat

The FAA Skyhawks entered combat for the first time during the 1982 Malvinas/ Falklands War. The A-4Bs of V Brigada were initially deployed to BAM Río Gallegos and the A-4Cs to BAM San Julián, although the A-4Bs later moved to San Julián.

During the war they damaged HMS *Argonaut*, HMS *Broadsword*, HMS *Glasgow*, RFA *Sir Bedivere*, RFA *Sir Lancelot* and RFA *Sir Tristram*. They claimed to have hit *Invincible* and sank HMS *Antelope*, HMS *Coventry*, RFA *Sir Galahad* and Landing Craft Utility (LCU) F-4 from HMS *Fearless*. They also struck ground targets.

The cost was 17 pilots and 19 aircraft – ten A-4Bs and nine A-4Cs. After the war just seven A-4Cs remained in service, this



Among the last A-4 Skyhawks in operational service, Argentina's A-4AR Fightinghawks are also the most capable, as Santiago Rivas reports

All images Santiago Rivas unless noted



Fightinghawks Argentina's

small surviving force joining the A-4Bs with V Brigada Aérea in 1983. With the FAA keen to rebuild its Skyhawk fleet, McDonnell Douglas representatives visited the Fábrica Militar de Aviones (FMA) factory in Córdoba Province in June 1986. Ultimately, however, discussions on a possible restart of production came to nothing.



Upgrade proved to be the way forwards, the first A-4AR arriving with V Brigada Aérea in December 1997. The A-4B and A-4C remained in service until 1999, A-4Bs C-207, C-222 and C-225 and A-4Cs C-314 and C-322 being withdrawn from service on March 29, 1999, and A-4Bs C-214 and C-221 following on March 31.

Fightinghawk Hatched

Early in the 1990s, the FAA had started thinking seriously about a replacement for the A-4, showing interest in the F/A-18 Hornet and F-16 Fighting Falcon. The United States refused access to either type, instead offering 54 former US Marine Corps A-4M Skyhawks (48 A-4Ms and six OA-4Ms). The FAA was unhappy with the equipment levels of the aircraft, however,

continued...



and the Ministry of Defence began looking for offers against an upgrade contract.

An offer from Smiths Industries and the US Navy initially proved interesting, while in October 1992 McDonnell Douglas and Spain's CASA made an offer to upgrade the A-4s in Spain, including an upgrade for VI Brigada Aérea's Mirage IIIs as part of the deal. McDonnell Douglas made a further offer in 1994, this time involving the supply of 23 upgraded ex-Kuwaiti A-4KU jets, but this was rejected owing to the condition of the aircraft, which were eventually bought by the Brazilian Navy in 1998.

After long negotiations, the Argentine Air Force signed a contract with Smiths Industries to buy 32 A-4Ms and four OA-4Ms from the US Navy for US\$70 million. Simultaneously, the Ministry of Defence accepted a proposal from Lockheed Aircraft to take control of FMA and perform the A-4 modernisation in the United States and Argentina. Lockheed Aircraft Argentina Services SA (LAASA, later Lockheed Martin Aircraft Argentina Services SA, LMAASA) was created with a US\$214 million upgrade contract for the Skyhawks, partly for completion in Córdoba and partly in Ontario, California. The work included provision of the AN/



APG-66 radar, as used on early F-16 variants.

On August 2, 1995, the first A-4M, serial number C-905 and named 'Gaucho 02', arrived at Ontario from the storage facility at Davis Monthan AFB in Arizona. On September 6, 1995, C-906, 'Gaucho 01' made the same trip. The latter's wing root structure was found to be corroded, however, and it was replaced by another airframe which took the same serial. On September 30 the first four aircraft for modernisation were delivered to LAASA by sea.

A Very Modern A-4

The Fightinghawk programme included a total overhaul of the airframe and the addition of new avionics, including the ARG-1 radar, a version of the APG-66 downgraded after pressure from the British, but subsequently upgraded in Argentina. The cockpit received two LCD multifunction head-down displays (HDD), an up front control panel (UFCP) and a head-up display (HUD).

The Fightinghawk also received HOTAS (hands on throttle and stick) functionality, the AN/ARL-93(V)1 radar warning receiver (RWR), two EGI-2 (embedded GPS/laser inertial) platforms, IFF and provision for chaff and flares. The jets also have digital mission computers, with a ground mission mapping system, on which the pilot enters sortie information for transfer to the aircraft using a data transfer module (DTM). An integrated ECM system is mounted over the engine bay and avionics connection is by fibre optic net, through a MIL-STD-1553 bus controller.

The first four A-4ARs (C-906, C-908, C-917 and C-918) and one OA-4AR (C-903) were delivered on December 12, 1997 at the Lockheed Martin Skunk Works facility at Palmdale, California, then ferried to Argentina. Córdoba delivered its first A-4AR (C-922) on August 3, 1998. The last Fightinghawks (C-905 and C-916) were delivered to V Brigada Aérea on January 7, 2000. With the fleet complete, the FAA decided to keep 18 in storage at the Area de Material Río Cuarto (ARMACUAR) and 18 in service.

Weapons Systems

On October 1, 1998, C-906 was taken to the United States by sea to join OA-4AR C-901 at Lockheed Martin's facilities for weapons systems and avionics

integration. This marked the beginning of the second part of the Fightinghawk project.

Major Eduardo Latorre was despatched as a test pilot, to work alongside Lockheed Martin pilots. The aircraft were extensively tested in the United States, optimising various weapons with different radar modes and the mission computer. The AIM-9L Sidewinder missile was among the stores tested, along with Elbit EHUD ACMI (air combat manoeuvring instrumentation) pods acquired from BVR Technologies of Israel. Work in the US was concluded in January 2000 and the Fightinghawks returned by sea to Argentina. Two months later the first AIM-9L Sidewinders arrived, followed later by the AIM-9M. The Dardo 2, a locally developed 500lb (226kg) GPS-guided glide bomb was also added to the A-4AR's inventory.



In Action

The Fightinghawk made its first international and public appearance in March 1998, when Major Guillermo Martinez flew an example over the Andes to the FIDAE International Air & Space Defence Fair Exhibition at Los Cerrillos, Santiago de Chile.

The type took part in its first exercise on June 26, 1998. Exercise Antuna I was an air-to-air and air-to-surface demonstration at V Brigada Aérea's Antuna range facilities. Between August 17 and 21, 1998, the Fightinghawks flew their first joint exercise, Aguila 1, with the Mirage IIIEAs and IAI M5 Fingers of VI Brigada Aérea and F-16C and F-16D Fighting Falcons of the 160th Fighter Squadron, 187th Fighter Wing, Alabama Air National Guard. The Fightinghawks flew simulated air-to-air combat against the USAF F-16s. Deployments across Argentina then began, including patrols along the northern border, where drug and smuggling flights from Bolivia and Paraguay are common.

In May 2001 the Fightinghawks flew in Aguila II, again with US Air National Guard participation, while Cruzex II in November 2004 took them to Brazil, for an exercise repeated in 2006. In 2005 they took part in Ceibo, a combined exercise in Mendoza, with aircraft from Brazil, Chile and Uruguay, and in 2009 they visited Chile for Salitre II, alongside US, Brazilian, Chilean and French forces.



Losses and Operations

Two Fightinghawks have been lost. C-906 was the first, on July 6, 2005, with the loss of its pilot Lt Horacio Flores. The second was C-936, on August 24, 2005, its pilot ejecting.

The first operational Fightinghawk missions were flown during the fourth Summit of the Americas, at Mar del Plata in 2005. All of the continent's presidents were present for meetings on November 4 and 5, and because President George Bush was involved, the US requested a major security effort. Sidewinder-armed A-4ARs were deployed to VI Brigada Aérea at Tandil and the US Air Force deployed two E-3 AWACS to Comandante Espora Naval Aviation Base. While the meetings took place, the A-4ARs flew combat air patrols, under guidance from the E-3s and a FAA Westinghouse AN/TPS-43 radar facility.

A similar operation was mounted in August 2009, when the meeting of the presidents of the Unión de Naciones Suramericanas (UNASUR), Union

of South American Nations) took place at Bariloche.

Today the A-4AR Fightinghawks are beginning to show their age and the Air Force is considering their replacement, but budget cuts oblige the FAA to plan for their continued operation into at least the first half of the next decade. Indeed, the Mirages and Fingers are in more urgent need of replacement and studies have been made into pulling A-4ARs out of storage as a stopgap replacement for the deltas until a new type is purchased.

1 The pilot of A-4AR C-905 stays low during gear retraction.

2 Fightinghawks formate behind a KC-130H tanker. Favio Nuñez

3 Drag-chute deployed on roll-out after landing.



GORDON “GORDO” GRAY

• Contemporaneous notes on A4D Record Flight •



October 1955

S	M	Tu	W	Th	F	S
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

[Ed. Note: These notes, written by Gordo Gray during the week of the record-breaking flight, were transcribed from barely legible note cards provided by Gordo's son, John. Italics added.]

- Adm. Burke checks for records available – old record – beat by 1%
- Selection – 2 pilots qualified (1 a Marine)
- Arrive L.A. Sat night (*October 8th*)

• **Monday** (*October 10th*) briefing by aero and perf. people

Data dreamed up.

2 ways flying course

814 best engine available – engine seized

Rudder status

• **Tuesday** (*October 11th*)

Drive to EAFB (*Edwards Air Force Base*)

Truck 814 up

• **Tuesday** P.M.

Bob Rahn – 100 km record (*Rahn broke the world speed record at 100-km in the F4D Skyray with a run of 728.114 on September 16, 1952*)

Explain course and rules.

5 times around in Navion. Difficulty in seeing pylons. Hills.

• **Wednesday** (*October 12th*)

814 engine trouble

820 rudder rigging

Pull panic switch for F9F-8 at 11 a.m. ½ hour practice, entering course, faster & faster. Max 620 mph.

• **Thursday** (*October 13th*)

- 820 – not cleared to high speeds in turn cause faster than contractor had done. Locked rudder.
- 5 minute on straight and level on deck with F-86 chase for fuel consumption. 705 kts.
- Rudder failure – fuel gage out.

• **Friday** – busy day (ed. note: Oct 14th)

- Sporting license
- Changing rudders all night before
- Movies – interviews with ????
- Decide how to fly course
- Late p.m.

300 km 685 check trim on splitter plate rudder.

200 km 685 wing tip

- General's house – change of time

• **Saturday** (*October 15th*)

Judges – fogged in at L.A., finally arrive in droves – people to pylons.

No fuel gage – will transfer pumps keep up?

Tips strengthened – locked splitter rudder.

Igniters worked over – engine hopped up 1% and 10 degrees centigrade

Tail hook fairing, slats riveted.

- Flight – fuel and barographs on end of runway.

Lamp lighter – light early – Indian revolt

I have shakes!

Light off – take off on run.

Hit start just right

Difficulty adjusting eng – rough air

Hold together???

Really moving on first 2

Almost missed pylon – bushes, no fire or mirror

Extra men on benchmark

Lose counter – no radio.



GORDO GRAY, famous among Skyhawk aficionados for setting the world 500 KM closed-course speed record at 695.163 mph in A4D-1 137820 on October 15, 1955, enlisted in August of 1943 as an Aviation Cadet, V-5. He trained at Norman, OK, Kingsville and Beeville, TX, and earned his wings and ensign bars in February 1946. He then transitioned to F6Fs at NAS Miami and carrier qualified aboard USS *Ranger* before reporting to his first squadron, VF-153, at NAS Alameda. Within two months, he embarked in USS *Antietam* and departed on a 9-month West-Pac cruise.

Returning to Alameda in November 1947, he transitioned to F8F-1 Bearcats and was promoted to LTJG in February 1949. After serving an instructor tour in SNJs at NAAS Saufley Field, he was promoted to LT, transitioned to the F9F-2 and deployed to Korea with CVG-9 aboard USS *Philippine Sea*. He flew 59 combat missions in the F-4U-4 Corsair, earning 5 Air Medals.

After attending Naval Air Test Pilot School (July 54 to February 55), he was assigned to Flight Test at the Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River, MD, where he served as project officer for the S2F, F4D, A4D and F7U-3.

LT Gray participated in the initial carrier qualification tests of the Skyhawk, taking A4D-1 137822 aboard USS *Ticonderoga* on September 13-15, 1955, logging 6 touch and go landings and two arrested landings.

Later in his career, Gordo Gray commanded VF-32 (F8U), attended the National War College and commanded VF-174. He finished his college degree at George Washington University and served in the Pentagon (Office of Program Appraisal, Air Ops) before he retired as a Captain, USN, in July 1970. His active service totaled 27 years, 6 months, and he amassed 4550 total flight hours (1900 jet) and logged 575 arrested landings (200 at night). Captain Gray was a member of the Golden Eagles and was member #77 of the Skyhawk Association. He passed away on December 2, 2007.

The accompanying description of the record-breaking flight was excerpted from **Douglas A-4 Skyhawk, Attack and Close-Support Fighter Bomber**, by Jim Winchester (see sidebar), and many of the images were provided by Gordo's son John.

continued...

SPEED RECORD by Jim Winchester

In 1955 it was decided that Douglas should mount a bid on the 500-kilometre closed-circuit speed record. The Douglas-Navy test team had already broken two speed records during testing of the F4D Skyray in 1953 and the low-level 500-km circuit record, then held by the Air Force, seemed the most appropriate one for the A4D to attempt. The chosen airframe was BuNo 137820, the ninth Skyhawk built and which was fitted with an instrumentation probe on the nose and wired to record various performance parameters.

In October a 100-km long test circuit was marked on the Rosamond Dry Lake near Palmdale with a series of twelve pylons erected and fitted with mirrors to help the pilot visually acquire the turn points. Douglas Test Team personnel set off smoke grenades to aid pylon recognition by the speeding pilot. To make doubly sure, a pile of tyres was set alight at the main pylon, generating an unmistakable column of black smoke.

Preliminary flights began on 13 October. On one low-level run flown by Bob Rahn, an unofficial straight-line speed of 703 mph (1131 km/h) was recorded, but in the process the top part of the rudder came away. It was decided to switch rudders for one of the 'tadpole' type, which had already been selected for the A4D-2. Skyhawk '820' was also fitted with the later-type windscreen with a flat central panel and the sugar scoop tail fitting. The original J65-W-2 engine was used rather than the slightly higher-thrust W-16 version. The airframe was highly polished for the attempt and wore only the basic markings of national insignias and 'Navy' titles.

On 15 October 1955, everything was in place for the record attempt proper. Navy Lieutenant Gordon 'Gordo' Gray was the junior of two pilots assigned to the A4D programme from the Naval Air Test Center at Patuxent River for the official naval acceptance and approval tests. To this day he does not know why he was chosen to be the one to make the record flight. Although an experienced pilot, he had only about eighteen hours in the A4D by this date.

Gray took off from nearby Edwards Air Force Base just after sunrise in order to take advantage of the cooler temperatures that would improve engine performance and reduce turbulence at low level. The Federation Aeronautique Internationale (FAI) and the National Aeronautic Association (NAA) specified that this record be awarded for a flight of 500km (310.68 miles) distance at an altitude no greater than 100 metres (328 ft.) above ground level. In fact, most of the flight was made at 100 – 150 ft (30-50m) above the desert floor in order to ensure the height limit was not busted.

With smoke billowing from the turn points and the mirrored pylons flashing in the early morning sun, Gray lowered Skyhawk 820 towards the Joshua trees and sagebrush on the desert floor and accelerated towards the starting point. As he passed the first marker the clocks were started and the little silver jet raced towards the first turn and pulled into a thirty-degree bank. By the third corner the A4D was up to its average speed and banking at seventy degrees in order to stay on course. After five circuits of the course in 26.8 minutes and a total flying time of less than 45 minutes, it was all over. The A4D returned to land at Edwards and the scientists made their calculations – the 500km distance had been flown at an average speed of 695.163mph (118.517km/h) and the record belonged to Gray, Douglas and the Navy. Previously held by an Air Force F-86H Sabre, this marked the first time the record was held by an attack aircraft.

Skyhawk 820 was returned to test duties and the smooth rudder was re-installed. After service with several test units, including the Naval Torpedo Unit, the record-breaking A4D-1 was retired to the Navy's desert storage centre at Litchfield Park, Arizona. In 1969 it was stricken from the inventory, which probably means that it passed to one of the scrap yards near the base and eventually to the smelter.

*Ed. Note: This account was excerpted from **Douglas A-4 SKYHAWK, Attack and Close-support Fighter Bomber** by Jim Winchester (Pen & Sword Books Ltd, 2005, p. 32). Used with permission of the author.*

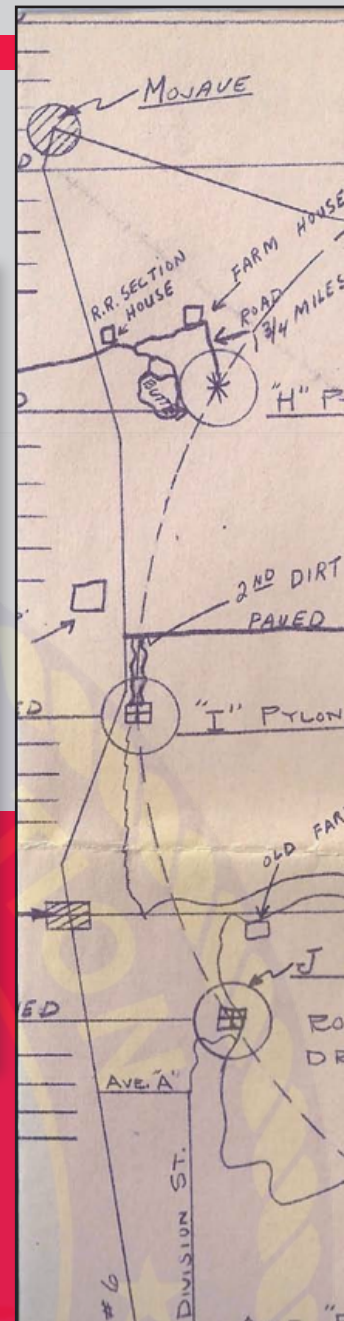
*For additional information, see "Betting on A Record," **The A-4Ever**, Summer 2007.*

"GORDO" GRAY

Continued...



Gordo Gray starting A4D-1 137820 prior to record flight. (Skyhawk Assn. website)



A4D-1 137820 in flight. Note "tadpole" rudder installed for record flight due to failures during flight test.

(Skyhawk Assn. website)





**Hand-drawn map of record course
laid out on the Rosamond Dry Lake
near Palmdale.**

(Skyhawk Assn. website)

"GORDO" GRAY

Continued...



The camera captures Gray at the start. An altitude of 100 to 150 ft. was maintained for most of the flight. (Skyhawk Assn. website)



On the race course. Gray's notes indicate difficulty seeing at least one pylon because the tires were not burning and the mirror wasn't visible. Due to turbulence, he had difficulty adjusting the engine and was actually concerned that the plane might not hold together. The last note concerning the flight indicated that he lost track of the pylon count due to loss of radio. (Skyhawk Assn. website)

"GORDO" GRAY

Continued...

*Record-breaking
plane and pilot.*

(Skyhawk Assn. website)

*Gray poses post-flight
with ground crew.*

(Skyhawk Assn. website)



**Gray conducts press
conference following flight.**

(Skyhawk Assn. website)

**FAI certificate, Diplome de
Record, certifies record:
695.163 mph on October
15, 1955. This record was
previously held by the Air
Force F-86H Sabre.**

(Skyhawk Assn. website and Winchester)



FÉDÉRATION AÉRONAUTIQUE INTERNATIONALE

Diplôme de Record

NOUS SOUSSIGNÉS CERTIFIONS QUE *Lieut. Gordon Larimore Gray Jr* *U.S.N.*
SUR *Douglas A 4 D-1 Skyhawk, Moteur Wright J-65 W-4 Jet*

à ÉTABLI LE *15 Octobre 1955*

LE RECORD SUIVANT : *Vitesse de 1118,700 Km/h. sur circuit fermé de 500 Km.*
à Rogers Dry Lake, Edwards, Californie

Classe C - Groupe 1

Pour *N. A. A.*

LE PRÉSIDENT,

LE SECRÉTAIRE GÉNÉRAL DE LA F.A.I.

LE PRÉSIDENT DE LA F.A.I.

Thomas L. Simpson *J. R. Gillman*

H. Barthe

SKYHAWKS AT OSKOSH

• 2012 AirVenture •

Story and photos by Dave Dollarhide



Oshkosh 2012 was another great year for A-4s, with two J-65 powered Skyhawks sharing the ramp and the skies. As shown below, the Warbird Heritage Museum's A-4B (BuNo 142112), no new-comer to Oshkosh, was joined for the first time this year by Skyhawk Ventures' A-4C (BuNo 149606).

Warbird Heritage's A-4B is painted to represent A-4C 148609, the aircraft flown by LCDR T.R. Swartz when he shot down a MiG-17 over North Vietnam with an

unguided ZUNI 5" rocket. Swartz was a pilot with VA-76, operating from USS *Bon Homme Richard* (CVA-31) during the mission of May 1, 1967. The aircraft is in its second reincarnation, having been previously restored in the late 80's by the Combat Jets Flying Museum of Houston, TX. Additional information on this aircraft is available on the Warbird Heritage Museum website (http://www.warbirdheritagefoundation.org/WHF_AC_A4_1_Hist.html)

We reported on the successful restoration of Skyhawk Ventures' A-4C in the cover story of the Fall 2011 edition of *The A-4Ever*. Known as BuNo 149606, the aircraft is actually made up of major sections of three different A-4s. The front half of the fuselage is from 149606, while the rear half of the fuselage came from 148576. The wing was salvaged from 145131. The plot to restore this jet was hatched in 2003 by Dan Carr and Porter Spangler. Their effort culminated in a "first" flight on August 5, 2011, from their home field in Sanford, FL. Larry "Worm" Elmore, was at the controls, and is in fact an alumnus of VA-86, the squadron whose markings adorn the aircraft. See (<http://skyhawkventures.com/index.html>) for more information.





Dan Carr and Larry Elmore brief the crowd.

The photogenic A-4s are big hits with their fans.

A-4C of Skyhawk Ventures being towed to parking.





AE 402 joins NP 685 to form Skyhawk det Oshkosh.

OSHKOSH 2012

Continued...

In a different age, the A-4s share a ramp with a former adversary – a MiG-21.





A rare sight these days: two J-65 powered A-4s wait for the next launch.

OSHKOSH 2012

Continued...

*As in the '60s,
the A-4s share
a deck with an
FJ Fury.*





OSHKOSH 2012

Continued...

Paul Wood, owner of NP 685, shows off his 150 gallon drop tank, modified to transport the starting probe.





After a long taxi to the ramp, engine oil flows down the side of the fuselage from the “total loss” oil system of the J-65.



OSHKOSH 2012

Continued...

The clean, simple wing-line of the A-4B. Few fleet aircraft were maintained as well.





AVIATOR'S SECRET MISSION

• General Noriega's "Prison of Death" • Panama, 1989 •

By Jim Ruffer

My tale is about how a Marine Corps "Black Sheep Squadron" pilot and Vietnam veteran, who became a Navy Flight Surgeon and, later, an Air Force Flight Surgeon, got caught up in a Central American "prison of death" and helped US Army's Delta Force pull off the rescue of an American hostage, Kurt Muse. I was that doctor and the "inside man" for the caper. The prison was the Modelo in Panama City.

"Delta" had been in the Iranian Desert in 1980 during "Desert One." My Naval Air Training Command companion, Captain James Schaefer USMC, piloted a helicopter on that mission that was accidentally air-taxed, during a blinding dust storm, into a C-130. Eight men died. The mission to rescue the American hostages in Tehran ended there. To my knowledge, since WWII there had not been a rescue of an enemy-held American by U.S. forces until "Operation Just Cause". The rescue of Kurt Muse was to be the first objective of that invasion, executed by "Delta" with planning intel from me.

During a period of nine months I was reluctantly admitted into the Modelo prison, three times per week, by its resentful keepers. Frequency of access had been my purpose at the caustic negotiations. The Panamanian Dictator was obliged to allow one uniformed American medical officer into the prison to attend the American hostage, after President George H. W. Bush threatened travel prohibitions against the Panamanian Regime. I dedicated my life to the care and rescue of Kurt Muse, the "owner and operator" of clandestine "Liberation Radio", which had so annoyed General Noriega. Kurt Muse was to be eliminated, and with his life's dilemma, life for me became stranger than fiction; for him it became almost unbearable.

I did not know that the hostage's teenage daughter, Kimberly Muse, then in hiding, knew my daughter, Kristina

Ruffer. In fact, they were best friends at school. I had not even known the name, "Muse", until a few days before I began my missions into the prison. I had to ask myself the question, after these events had passed, "Had I cared enough about my daughter and her extraordinary life in those tender years?" I had not known that she had "lost" her best friend. For me the Modelo was secret business, and this alone offered a slight excuse for not knowing of my daughter's personal plight during the intrigues.

Early in the prison visits with Kurt Muse, he spoke of the sounds within the prison as haunting and horrible. He could hear men being tortured, and described awakening to his own screams. I would find him faint and trembling from emotional shock after a man had been butchered just outside of his cell. Blood was something I trod through within the Modelo. It had always been a place to dread, but it became a place of unimaginable horror during my watch.

For example, my Panama City land-lord (beautiful, aristocratic, Lidia De Janon) was arrested and incarcerated in Modelo, and was fed hand-slopped food by transvestite inmates. They themselves were used in the most hideous ways against the captives of the Regime. After her eventual release from prison Lidia De Janon vowed to me to die at her own hands if ever threatened with Modelo again.

Among the memorable, unique, and disturbing sounds of the prison were the "phantom" typewriters that hummed continually, night and day, particularly during the height of Noriega's purges of his political opponents and other enemies. Noriega's madmen documented the entry of each prisoner into their infernal "sanctum." Noriega's secret organizations of extortion and mayhem, outside the prison, did not bother with such fastidiousness.

Then, there was Barabbas.



Barabbas was a mystery to Muse, and he showed much interest in the Barabbas story. The man was responsible for howling that permeated the prison at night and invaded the souls of the inmates until it became part of them. Did a Barabbas figure indeed haunt the bowels of the prison, eating his excrement, rattling his chains, and howling? Meanwhile, the sound was as diabolical as it was inexplicable to the uninitiated.

I lengthened my stays within the prison, using every imaginable subterfuge, to support the suffering hostage, and I completed the "intelligence requirement" at each visit. Then, there came the day when I played my first prank on Kurt Muse. The time was right, as there was a need for a new "mood" within the walls that encompassed us. "Kurt," I whispered knowingly, to captivate his attention instantly. "I found out who Barabbas is!" Kurt fell for this bait instantly, and he looked around him to see if it was safe for me



Blacksheep pilots pose with A-4C 147788 circa 1968/69. Photo via author.

to betray such a secret. In nine months I had never uttered a word that I was not prepared to have overheard (or picked up by a hidden microphone). I continued, "Kurt, Barabbas is ancient, and has been in the Modelo forever, it seems. He is a black man, naked, with a pure white afro, chained, and completely mad. He was picked up in the jungles of Panama by a previous regime, in 1929, I would say, while hand-cranking a clandestine radio, 'Liberation Panama'."

Kurt seemed incredibly impressed with this bit of information, exhibiting a stunned expression; and he probably, transiently, considered himself a fortunate man in the comparison, until, that is, he *made* the comparison of his own plight with that of Barabbas I had just described. At which point his amused stare transformed ever so subtly, muscle by muscle, twitch by twitch, as the story sank in and as his ire at being hoodwinked by the doctor fully developed. His expression seemed to say, a new

and different Doctor Ruffer, it would seem, has appeared in prison.

Gradually the amused stare had become a glare, and a very angry one for an instant, and then Kurt Muse began to laugh outrageously. He would repay the doctor in kind, later, during a future visit. And in spite of the danger and diabolism, or maybe even because of them, our souls became wedded in the quest for sanity and survival. The day would come when I would see Kurt Muse safe; when I would behold Barabbas, for myself, in an extraordinary moment; and when I would again demonstrate some modicum of adroit and practiced wisdom that helps make life so much fun.

History records that Kurt Muse was rescued, not without drama, in a well-planned and well-executed mission, by the US Army's Delta Force, during "Part One" of the "Invasion of Panama". I had helped prepare for and plan that caper.

End Note: As an aside, Producer Lauren Herz put together a "Military Channel" production of these events titled, "Combat Zone Series; Rescue in Panama." My diary helped author John Gilstrap build the chronology for the prison portion of his book, "Six Minutes to Freedom."

(Ed. Note: Colonel Ruffer was a pilot with VMA-223/211 in Chu Lai and VMAT-102 in Yuma prior to becoming an MD. He served as a flight surgeon with both the U.S. Navy and U.S. Air Force. He was Deputy Command Surgeon for the United States Southern Command in Panama during the Invasion of Panama and was instrumental in the rebuilding of Panama's medical infrastructure. This story first appeared in *MiG Sweep*, Spring 2010. Used with permission of the author.)

FLYING LEATHERNECK MUSEUM UNVEILS RESTORED A-4M

By SA Editorial Staff



On July 21st, MajGen Bobby G. Butcher, USMC(ret) presided over the unveiling of A-4M 160264, the 2960th and last production model of the ubiquitous Douglas A-4 Skyhawk. The aircraft was repainted to match the scheme applied at the Douglas factory before it was delivered to the Marine Corps on February 27, 1979. That paint scheme commemorated the many U.S. and foreign operators of the aircraft.

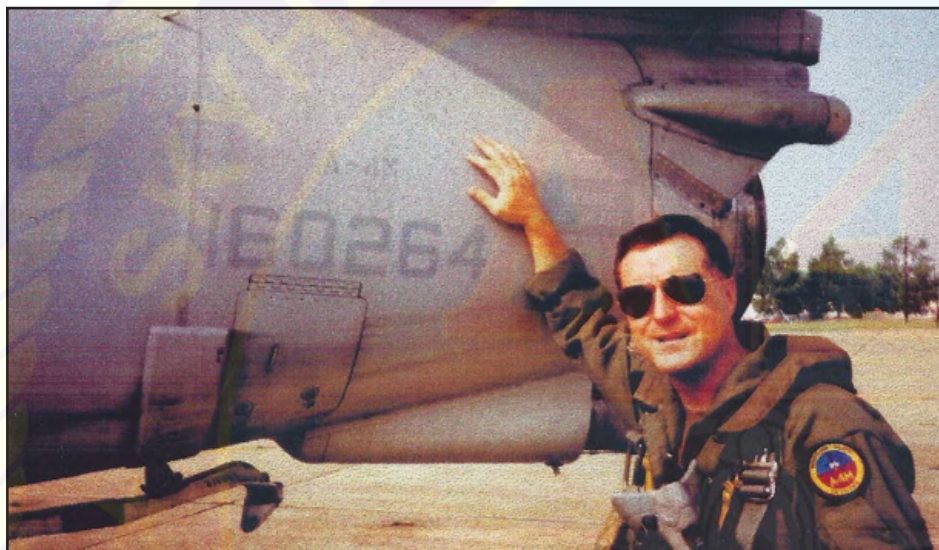
160264, as one of the last 24 A-4Ms built for the U.S. Marine Corps, had beefed-up main landing gear, permitting an increase in the A-4M's maximum arrested-landing weight to 16,500 pounds (from 14,500); field landing weight up to 18,000 pounds (from 16,000); and take-off up to 25,500 (from 24,500). Larger struts and wheels, as well as a different torque-link (scissors) shock absorbing system was incorporated in

production of these aircraft (beginning with BuNo 160241). The wheel-well doors were increased in size to accommodate the thicker wheels and scissors, giving that block of aircraft a distinctive profile when viewed head-on. (Source Tommy Thomason and Bill Egen).

This A-4 was delivered to VMA-331 at MCAS Cherry Point, NC, but spent most of its active service with the VMA-223 Bulldogs. In October of 1981, it was assigned to VX-5 at NWC China Lake, CA, where it served as a weapons and systems test platform for ten years. In March 1991, 160264 was assigned to the Marine Reserve unit at NAS Memphis, TN, and was operated by MAG-42 det B/VMA-124 until June 1994 when it was stricken from the active rolls.

The last production A-4 was flown from NAS Memphis to MCAS El Toro by LtCol Randy Cheston, Commanding Officer, MAG-42 det B. It was delivered to the aircraft museum at El Toro, and in June 2006, with the closing of MCAS El Toro, it was officially assigned to the Flying Leatherneck Museum at MCAS Miramar, CA.

Even though 160264 has been repainted, FLM will gratefully accept donations for its maintenance. Check out their website at www.flyingleathernecks.org for information.



Randy Cheston preflights 160264 prior to leaving NAS Memphis, TN, for ferry to MCAS El Toro.

Photo via Randy Cheston.



160264 at Flying Leatherneck Museum prior to repainting.

Photo via FLM.

Headed West. Cheston and LtCol Billy Oehl enroute MCAS El Toro, CA.

Photo via Randy Cheston.





160264 in the paint shop.
Photo via FLM.



Flying Leathernecks

Preserving Marine Aviation for the Future



Better than new. Photo by J.A. Dietsch.



*A fitting display for the last in a proud lineage.
Photo via Todd Frommelt.*



GOLDEN DRAGON PHOTO SHOOT

By Allan Cartwright

Yes, I know TheA-4Ever is a publication dedicated to the A-4, and this is but a picture of a F-8 Crusader, not a Skyhawk. Hear me out though, because like all pictures there is a story to go with this one.

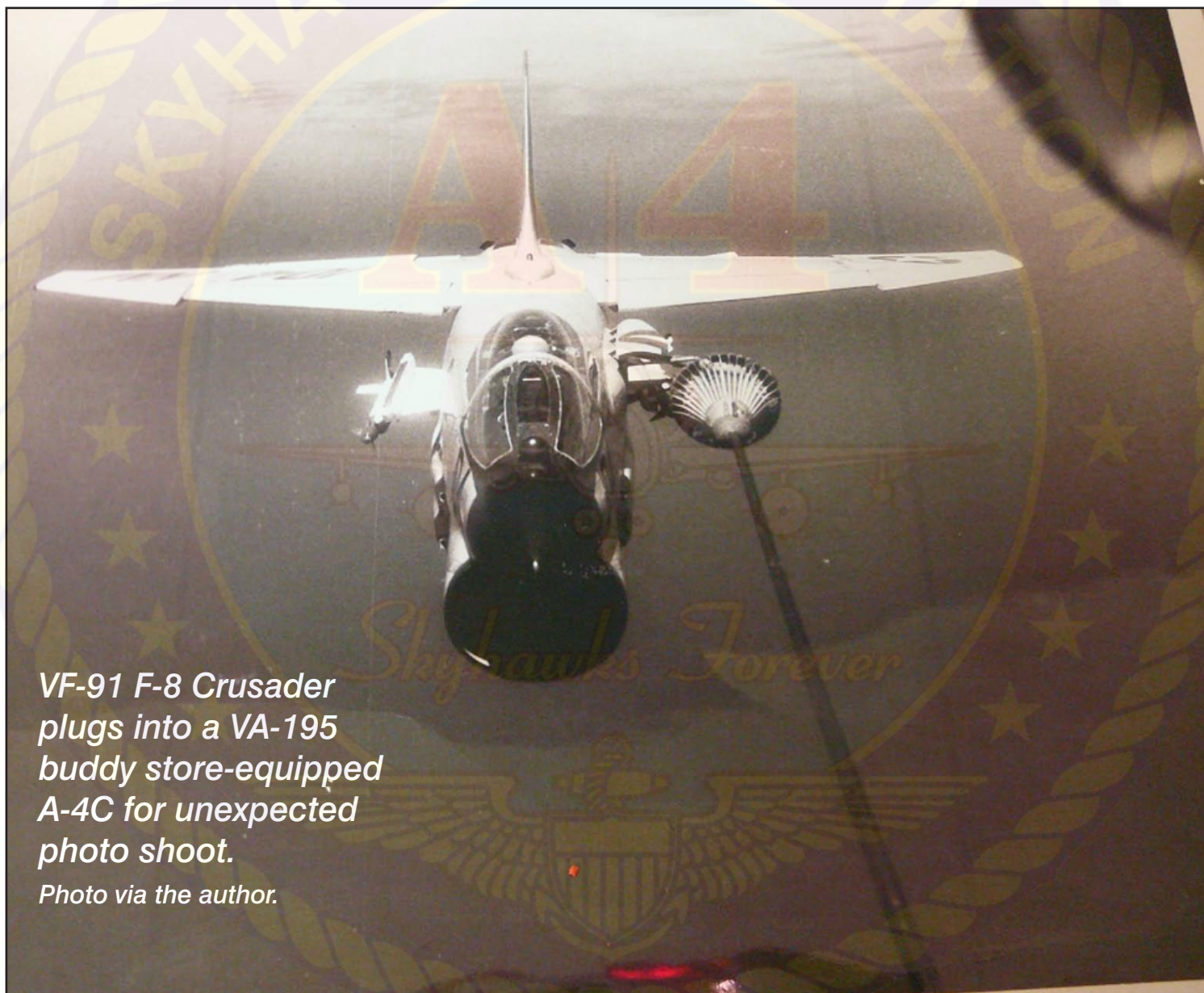
It was during my second Vietnam cruise with the VA-195 Dambusters aboard the USS *Ticonderoga* (CVA-14). On this particular hop I was to lead

a three-plane section on a road recce (reconnaissance) mission over the Vinh area.

The air wing intelligence brief was conducted by VA-192's fearless A.I. officer, Walt "Hot Flak" Marciniak. After learning where to expect enemy SAM and anti-aircraft sites, we headed back to Ready Room 4 for our flight brief. Mine was the standard stuff

about rendezvous, frequencies, possible targets, what to do if one of us got hit, bingo fuel requirements, getting back to the Tico, and recovery. After 200+ missions, except for Alpha strikes, these combat preflight briefs were all pretty mundane and repetitive.

We checked the maintenance board for our assigned aircraft, and it was at that point that I noticed the side number of the tanker plane our squadron was sending up for the launch. It was one of the trusty A-4Cs equipped with a bomb damage assessment (BDA) camera (I think VA-195 had four of them). These cameras were mounted on the aft of the plane and pointed backwards. As I recall, after bomb release the pilot hit a switch, and the camera took a series of five or six pictures at a pre-timed



*VF-91 F-8 Crusader
plugs into a VA-195
buddy store-equipped
A-4C for unexpected
photo shoot.*

Photo via the author.

interval. Good for one time only, once started the pilot could not stop the picture-taking process or start it over.

The pilot assigned to the refueling mission was Lt(jg) Pat Bidon. He was on his first cruise, a very likeable guy and excellent pilot. I got an idea, went back to Cag A.I. and talked "Hot Flak" into loading the tanker bird's BDA camera with film. I then briefed Pat on my plan.

This is how I imagined the hop would unfold. After the strike, our section would join up with the tanker. I'd let Pat know that we were there, then get in position to refuel. When I got close to the basket I'd key the mic twice to signal him to start the camera. Then I'd move forward and plug in. What a great idea: I'd have myself on film refueling the venerable A-4.

All went well, and I was very excited to get back aboard and have the pictures developed. After the trap (I'm sure it was an OK 3 Wire), I raced down the escalator to the ready room. I cornered Pat and asked if he got the shots. After much hemming and hawing, he explained that when it got close to recovery time, he thought our flight wasn't going to join up in time to do the shoot. So he decided that the next plane to ask for gas would be the one he photographed. The result is the picture of the F-8 from VF-191. Needless to say I was a very disappointed Naval Aviator.

Not one to give up on a good idea, I ceaselessly looked for another opportunity to get that picture. Alas, it was not to be. None of the Chippy BDA planes was ever assigned the tanker mission again.

I never did find out who the lucky VF-191 Satan's Kittens pilot was. I really wish I'd made the effort because I'm sure he would have enjoyed viewing and showing off this great, and probably one of a kind picture, throughout the years. I know I have.

Allan Cartwright
VSF-1 1965-1966
VA-195 1966-1968

P. S. If anyone wants a copy of the photos, I'll gladly send them on. Contact me at ok1wire@aol.com

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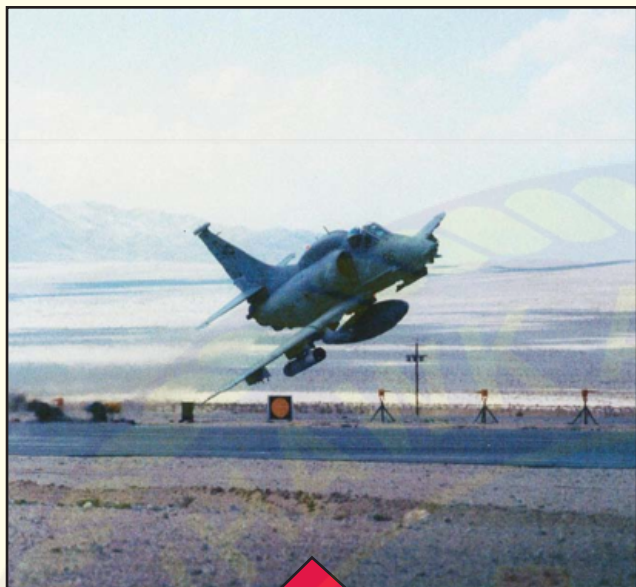


FROM THE ATTIC

• Mailbag •

Before they fade and crumple,
share your photos.

email to
sa-journal-editor@a4skyhawk.org



VMA-124 pilot performs low Transition at 29 Palms.
Photo via CWO-5 Al Rome.



VMA-124 pilots refuel from KC-130.
Photo by Harry Gann via Al Rome.



VMF/VMA-124 pilots celebrate the 50th anniversary of the squadron in 1992. WWII Corsair pilots are pictured with VMA-124 pilots who flew some of the last operational USMC A-4s. Pictured second from the left in the front row (standing) is LtCol Thomas Craig Wagner, then CO of VMA-124. In the middle of the first row (standing), wearing the white jacket, is LtCol Ken Walsh who as a 1/Lt flew with VMF-124 in the South Pacific during WWII. A 20-kill Ace flying Corsairs, he was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Roosevelt on February 8, 1944, for action in August 1943. Among other heroic acts, he singlehandedly attacked a flight of approximately 50 Zeros, claiming four kills before being forced down over Vella Lavella. Photo via Al Rome (pictured last on left in first row (standing)).



A sad end. VMA-124 A-4Ms after decommissioning. Photo via Al Rome.



VMA-124 A-4Ms enroute to the target for live ordnance training. Photo by Harry Gann, via Al Rome.

WARNING, Questionable Content Follows!!!!

Reader discretion advised!

PURESOME UNPLUGGED

• YP's Excellent Adventures •

By Jack "Youthly Puresome" Woodul

~ Happy Trails to You ~

"Bowling balls! That's the ticket!" submitted Puresome from the extreme back of the ready room, slamming his fist down in such a manly manner on his flip-up desktop that nearby Candy Andy, the Buddy-Store Bomber, sloshed his coffee. Up in the front of the ready room, the XO scowled over his shoulder at Puresome, the outburst having made him soil a memo.

"No more crummy Steel Tigers," continued Puresome, a strange, messianic light in his eye. "I figured out how to close down the Ho Chi Minh Trail for sure!"

Candy Andy and a few other worthless JOs, trying to look busy enough to justify hanging around the relatively cool ready room, happily stopped justifying.

"What we do," continued Puresome, "is load up with bowling balls, drop 'em on the sides of the hills above the trail, and all this mud and stuff slides down on the trail. Then ol' Gomer will come to fix things up. And when he gets done, he's got to stack the bowling balls. They keep falling down, he gets all mental and batshit, and we kick his ass and go home."

Working the Bowling Ball Problem

Weed was the AvWeps division officer, and ordnance was his game. His analytical mind went to work on the problem. "Lessee, we could use a multiple-bowling-ball ejector rack, a 'MBBER,' carry six bowling balls per rack, use a centerline tank, two MBBERs and a single bowling ball on the outboard stations — that's fourteen

balls per plane, fifty-six per division. Don't know about ballistics, though," Weed thought. "Hey, Andy," Weed shot in Candy Andy's direction. "Reckon a bowling ball has about the same mil lead as a buddy store?"

Andy wearily lofted his middle finger at Weed as he had some four thousand times before, ever since he became known as the Buddy Store Bomber, inadvertently lofting it instead of the practice bomb on his outboard station in a great arc and, incidentally, getting a fairly good hit.

"Naw, naw, naw!" said Worm. "We make a run to Hong Kong, get a bunch of Chinese finger traps and stick 'em in the bowling ball holes. Then when the Gomers try to pick them up, they got bowling balls stuck on their fingers, get all mental and batshit, and we come turn 'em into crispy critters!"

The Scheme Evolves

Entire universes of possibilities were occurring to Puresome's feverish mind. Not bowling balls, but sheep!

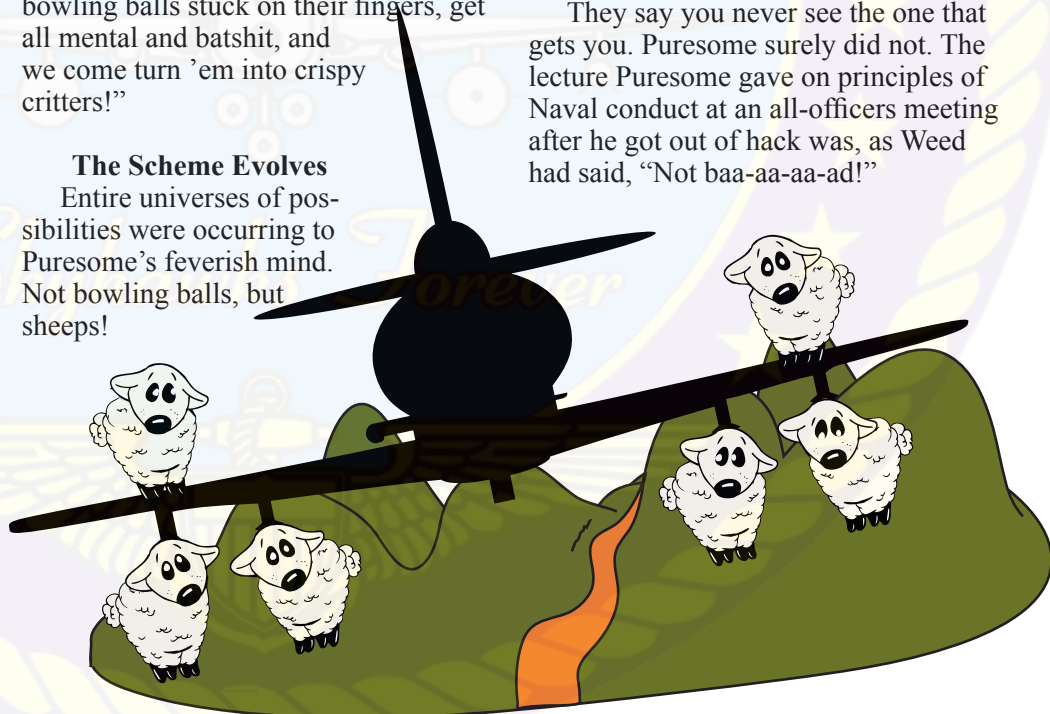
"Sheeps! That's the ticket!" Puresome's manly desk slam caused XO Parker's pen to blot the "white whizzer" he was composing about junior officer training, and he arose slowly from piles of paperwork to terminate Puresome with extreme prejudice.

Puresome, though, was on a roll, oblivious to all. "We get these sheeps, see, fix up some 'multiple sheep ejector racks,' — MSHERs — stick two sheeps per rack, two on the outboard stations, six per plane, twenty-four per division, use the same mil lead as a buddy store and, just before launch, the ordies will stick Chinese finger traps in their units. Drop 'em on the trail, and ol' Gomer, got to be horny, sees these sheeps and it's all over!"

Puresome, in the rapture of his vision, failed to check his six, from which the XO was rolling in off the perch.

"See," continued Puresome, "you got all these Gomers in permanent carnival knowledge with these sheeps, they'd be too embarrassed to do anything but emigrate to Olongapo and do night club acts, and we win the war and go home in glory!"

They say you never see the one that gets you. Puresome surely did not. The lecture Puresome gave on principles of Naval conduct at an all-officers meeting after he got out of hack was, as Weed had said, "Not baa-aa-ad!"



SCHEDULING STUFF

• Reunions & Requests •



PLAN AHEAD

- ★ **Skyhawk Association 2012 Annual Meeting and Luncheon at Tailhook:** 12:00 noon, September 7, 2012, Nugget Hotel. Guest speaker will be MajGen Jon Gallinetti, USMC (ret).
- ★ **Tailhook Association Reunion & Symposium 2012,** Nugget Hotel, Sparks, NV, September 6-9. This year's reunion celebrates the Centennial of Marine Aviation with Commandant General James Amos as guest of honor. Check out the Skyhawk Association booth in the exhibit area and the Light Attack Admin.
- ★ **VMF/VMA-311 Tomcats Reunion:** Sept 5-9, Quantico, VA. See www.vmf-vma-311reunion.org for more information.
- ★ **VA-34 Blue Blasters Reunion:** Oct 19-21, Jacksonville, FL. Contact Ed Ohlert at ohlert@aol.com (703-860-5976) for information.
- ★ **VA-164 Ghost Riders Reunion:** Nov 1-4, Pensacola, FL. Contact Dennis Carroll at denniscarroll33@netscape.net for information.
- ★ **VMA-322 Fighting Gamecocks Reunion:** Nov 1-4, Pensacola, FL. Contact Dan Ventre at dtventre@comcast.net for information.



*List your reunion or event with Skyhawk Association, both print journal and website.
Contact the editor at sa-journal-editor@a4skyhawk.org.*

SKYHAWK PUZZLERS

• Puzzlers from Skyhawk Staff •



*Just a little puzzle this time.
What do you make of it?*

Can anyone identify the model A-4 that this stick was taken from? Provide your answer by emailing to: (sa-journal-editor@a4skyhawk.org). Look for the answer in the Fall 2012 issue.





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THE A-4EVER

Skyhawk Association

Fall 2012 Extra • Journal

Volume 18 • Number 3



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Contact: Bob Hickerson at sa-journal-editor@a4skyhawk.org

or mail to: Bob Hickerson
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