

THE A4 EVER

SKYHAWK ASSOCIATION JOURNAL Vol 21-4



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Winter 2015/2016

www.a4skyhawk.org



THE PREZ SEZ

By Bill "Jigger" Egen

NIPPY IN NIPPI

It was late November 1967 and Chu Lai was monsooning. Up pops an opportunity- I get the nod to take a bird to PAR, Progressive Aircraft Rework or sometimes called Paint and Return, at the NIPPI depot at NAS Atsugi, Japan. I was told to be ready to go anytime, but I needed a wingman – the issue being that no single A-4 flights were allowed Chu Lai to NAS Cubi, P.I. From Cubi to NAS Naha, Okinawa, and on to NAS Atsugi was no sweat: go by yourself! My WestPac experience at that point was just Chu Lai! The bird was due for mandatory induction 9 December. No potential wingman going east came up until 12 days later on 8 December, when I was told to launch and RDZ with Basketball for the section go – hold it Ops O, Basketball was a C-130! “Right on Lt – now get out there and find him!” Hours later, as soon as I was locked on Cubi’s TACAN – adios Basketball!

A late afternoon arrival dictated an RON. Too many Cubi specials at the BOQ bar resulted in me still in my zoom bag in the BOQ the next morning, and I had to be in Atsugi that night! At the flight line, I noted that my jet was missing. I suggested to the line shack that I would like to have it back. They shrugged and said that they thought it was for Shoe Horn induction (adding ECM gear). Not good! They had not opened any panels yet, but the aircraft was in the barn. A little encouragement (yelling) and quick filing, and I was on my way to NAS Naha.

Oxygen, oxygen! I don’t care what they say, it helps! Nice view

of the P.I. for the first time, and after Miyakejima, I was inbound to Okinawa. Eventually, there was a huge island to my right/front and an even bigger land mass on my left/front (can you say 40-degree lock off?). I was heading to China! After a fast correction to the east, I was back on track. Piece of cake – wait, no radio?? Getting into Naha was fun. I could see it for miles, but had no comm! Finally, as I closed on the destination, the old ARC-27 came to life. After landing, I got gas and a new radio.

It was now 1500ish, and I was heading to NAS Atsugi. Somebody should have been saying, “Not at night, Lt.” Unfortunately, I wasn’t fully briefed on the nuances of 1J1 flights. It got dark fast, and I was noticing lots of lights to the west which fit the profile fine. What I wasn’t noticing was the 110kt crosswind – hello Alaska! When the lights got more numerous, but a lot smaller, I put Tokyo on the nose and started talking. The Mt Fuji mountain wave rolled me inverted during my decent to a PAR approach on the only frequency I could receive. The temperature was about 95 degrees when I left Cubi, but in Atsugi it was 20 something degrees and blowing snow! I made the due date for inducting the aircraft into PAR, then spent the next 8 days working my way back to Chu Lai. After the Sano Hotel in Tokyo, Iwakuni, Okinawa, Cubi again and then Da Nang, I walked into the VMA-121 ready room trailer and asked about my next hop. At that point, the Ops O made a big deal out of the fact that he had my oxygen mask from



Bill "Jigger" Egen

the bird I left in Atsugi! You can’t remember everything when you are focused on getting out of the snow and going on liberty! God protects small kids and Marine 1stLts! BZ DS!!

GEEKS AT WORK

2015 has been a milestone year for the Skyhawk website. It doesn’t look any different now than it did at the beginning of the year, but behind the scenes a massive effort has been happening.

The original coding technique, using hammers and chisels I expect, served its purpose well, but we are accelerating past the crayon era to a new type of format to handle the web site images and text. Content Management Software (CMS, pay attention, the test is in the mail!) is something like Microsoft Word in that it allows us to present images and text in different formats and also allows others to participate in the creation or addition of presentations. CMS goes way beyond the capabilities of Microsoft Word in allowing us to create web sites with large amounts of data to maintain and present. Our webmaster, Gene “Blade” Atwell is the impetus for moving our web site onto a CMS platform, and his trench fighters led by Dave “Twidget” Weber are fully engaged. His CMS platform of choice is called

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IN MEMORY OF
M. DAVIS “WHIZZER” WHITE, D.D.S.
(1939-2007)

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BOMBS AWAY!

• Winter 2015-2016 •

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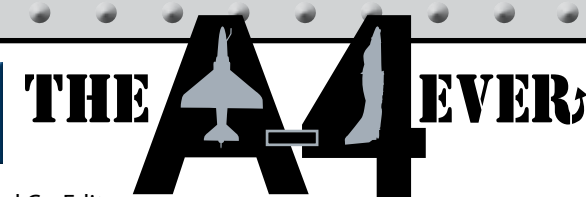
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Bob “Raven” Hickerson – Chairman and Co-Editor.

Dave Dollarhide - Co-Editor.

Gene “Blade” Atwell – Webmaster.

Feature Contributors: Bill “Jigger” Egen, Todd “Hun” Frommelt, Peter Mersky, Boom Powell, Joe Turpen, Gary Verver, Mark “Senator” Williams, 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 Journal Editor at sa-journal-editor@darw.it or mailed to Bob Hickerson, 1222 Balcones Drive, Fredericksburg, TX 78624.

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

On the Cover: A-4C 148523 VA-46 lining up on the catapult aboard USS *Shangri-La* circa 1962. LTJG Dralle is the name painted on the cockpit. 148523 was built in 1961 and destroyed in a 1963 crash during night field carrier landing practice, killing its Clansman pilot, LCDR Jack Tholl. US Navy photo.

“Drupal” which began running our website as of Dec 2015 (another test question).

Just so we can brag, Blade is preparing to move the website to a new version of Drupal that will allow additional and improved options for site presentation, AND will allow non-tech types (that is the rest of the staff!) to participate in adding to and editing the site. Twidget has just finished the preparation effort so our website is fully “Drupalized” and ready for further upgrades.

Will the user see any differences after future upgrades? Yes, here and there. BUT, the real difference will be behind the scenes, as we will have much more flexibility for site improvements. This puts the future of the site in a very good position and opens up options for further use of technology by the Association. Great job guys and remember, you heard it here first!

Furthermore, we have a fantastic group of researchers and computer whizzes who are constantly looking at ways to improve our website content. Gary Verver has been busy stuffing new A-4 photos into the web site and documenting many existing pictures of the A-4 with all the necessary details. He and John “Gabby” Gabbard also maintain a spreadsheet that contains the status of every A-4 bureau number built! It’s a work in progress, and we need your help regarding some of the “unknowns” in the database. Over 1500 A-4s have been lost over the years, and we are missing data on about 600 of those. Yes, we talk to the Safety Center and request AARs, etc. However, though we use every resource available,

F-4 seen towing a banner!



we still have holes in the data. Listed below are five Navy and five Marine accidents for which we cannot identify the pilot, for whatever reason. The Marine accidents were in Vietnam, but though we have access to the squadron, group and wing on-line command chronologies, we have no names! Hopefully this list will tweak some synapse’s in the steel trap minds of our aging student body – help us out if you can:

VA-43, A-4A, 139961, 28 Sept ‘60, Oceana; pilot/circumstance unknown.
VA-22, A-4B, 144896, 9 Jan ‘61, USS *Midway*; pilot/circumstances unknown.
VA-66, A-4C, 149534, 25 May ‘66, Oceana; pilot/circumstances unknown.
VA-164, A-4B, 142123, 14 Mar ‘63, Lemoore; pilot/circumstances unknown.
VA-112, A-4C, 148567, 12 Aug ‘66, Lemoore; pilot/circumstances unknown.

VMA-211, A-4E, 151998, 27 Jan ‘66, Chu Lai; unknown pilot OK- JATO bottle failure.
VMA-224, A-4E, 150034, 27 Jan ‘66, Chu Lai; unknown pilot OK- landing accident.
VMA-214, A-4C, 148535, 12 May ‘66, Chu Lai; unknown pilot OK- landing accident.
VMA-211, A-4E, 151029, 26 Dec ‘67, Chu Lai; unknown pilot OK- hydraulics failed.
VMA-311, A-4E, 151198, 6 May ‘68, Chu Lai; unknown pilot OK- mid-air with 145096.

This will be a routine section of the journal from now on as we increase our efforts to identify missing info. Please email us at sa-a4-research@darw.it if you can provide any details.

NOTAMS, R&I

For you data nuts, “Naval Aviation 1910-2010” is on the Naval History and Heritage Command web page (<http://www.history.navy.mil/>). Select Research, then Publications, and then Recent Publications. Once there, Vols I & II can be viewed and/or downloaded.

The Skyhawk Association Winter Board Meeting will be held 31 Mar – 3 April 2016 at the Holiday Inn San Antonio Downtown-Market Square. Other than the board meeting Saturday, 2 April AM, we are planning on some side trips and at least two dinners. Rooms can be reserved by calling 888-615-0725 and using reservation code SKY. Join us!

Planning on going to Tailhook September 8-10, 2016, at the Nugget in Reno? Get your reservation early: the toll free number is (800) 648-1177, and the main reservation code is GTAIL16.

SEMPER FI AND HAPPY NEW YEAR,
Jigger
zerocep@ec.rr.com

FROM THE EDITOR

By Bob “Raven” Hickerson
sa-journal-editor@darw.it

Welcome to the Winter 2015 digital issue of *The A-4Ever*, the Journal of the Skyhawk Association. This is our fourth annual digital issue, and you will notice a different approach this time.

This issue (Vol 21-4) is a retrospective of some of **the best of *The A-4Ever*** stories that we’ve published since the new Journal format was adopted in summer 2004. You may remember some of them from their original publication, but due to

natural turnover in members, we’re certain that a great many of our readers haven’t seen these stories which were published in the early years.

Because these are being reprinted in digital format (which provides unlimited space), we’re able to provide more and larger photographs, and in some cases updated information on the story subject or author.

We had fun reviewing 40 past issues of the Journal to select these stories, so we hope that you’ll en-

joy the issue as well. Don’t worry that we’re leading up to abandoning print publications. We’ll continue to provide three issues each year in print format, so watch for the spring 2016 issue which will arrive sometime in March.

Finally, we can never get too many stories for our Journal. Everyone who flew or fixed the A-4 has got at least one good story to tell. Make a resolution for 2016 to sit down and write that story! Don’t worry about format, grammar or spelling. We can fix all that, and you’ll be pleased when you see your story in print. If you have any questions (or a story ready to go), contact me at sa-journal-editor@darw.it.

MEMBER’S MOVIES



Skyhawk Association YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/A4SkyhawkAssociation>

Association Website Video Page <http://a4skyhawk.org/content/association-videos>

SCHEDULING

Reunions & Requests

PLAN AHEAD



- **Skyhawk Association Mid-Year Board Meeting**, March 31 – April 3, 2016, Holiday Inn San Antonio (Downtown Market Square). Watch website for more details, or email Bill Egen at zerocep@ec.rr.com.
- **MCAA Symposium and Reunion**, May 16-20, New Bern, NC.
- **Skyhawk Association 2016 Annual Meeting and Luncheon at Tailhook**: 12:00 noon, September 08, 2016, Nugget Hotel.
- **Tailhook Association Reunion & Marine Aviation Summit 2016**, Nugget Hotel, Sparks, NV, September 08-10, 2016.

Contact the editor at sa-journal-editor@darw.it and list your reunion or event with Skyhawk Association.

Feet Dry. Here They Come!

"The Mission. Interdict the flow of supplies supporting the NVA invasion of the South by mining a canal and roadway combination in the central part of North Viet Nam at 18°, 56' North, 105°, 18' East."

By Meredith "Pat" Patrick

Meredith W. "Pat" Patrick recounts a SAM encounter in 1968 while flying with the Black Knights of VA-23 in this excerpt from his Center for Naval Analyses report, "Surface-to-air Missile (SAM) Countertactics: Viet Nam War 1967-1973"

This story was originally published in the Skyhawk News, Spring/Summer 2000 edition



The Black Knights of VA-23 fly their new A-4Fs over North Viet Nam in 1968.

The air wing. My squadron, VA-23, was assigned to Carrier Air Wing 19 (CVW-19) from USS *Ticonderoga* (CVA-14) in the Tonkin Gulf, about 40 miles off the central coast of North Viet Nam. The air wing had two fighter squadrons and three light attack squadrons. (Ed. note: VF-191, VF-194 and VA-23, VA-192, VA-195) A detachment of four RF-8E reconnaissance aircraft, four KA-3 refueling tankers, four AD-5Q electronic support aircraft, and four WF-2 airborne early-warning aircraft. We also had a detachment of four rescue helicopters.

Strike composition. This event was scheduled as a "Mini-Alpha" strike with six A-4 bombers, two from each of the three Skyhawk squadrons aboard *Ticonderoga*. The four from VA-23 and VA-192 were A-4Fs, and the two from VA-195 were A-4 "super Charlies." The super Charlie was a stock A-4C with a more powerful engine that gave it almost as much thrust to weight ratio as the A-4F. The Charlies lacked our more sophisticated ECM suite, had two fewer weapons stations, and were not

wired for the CP741 computer or SHRIKE capability.

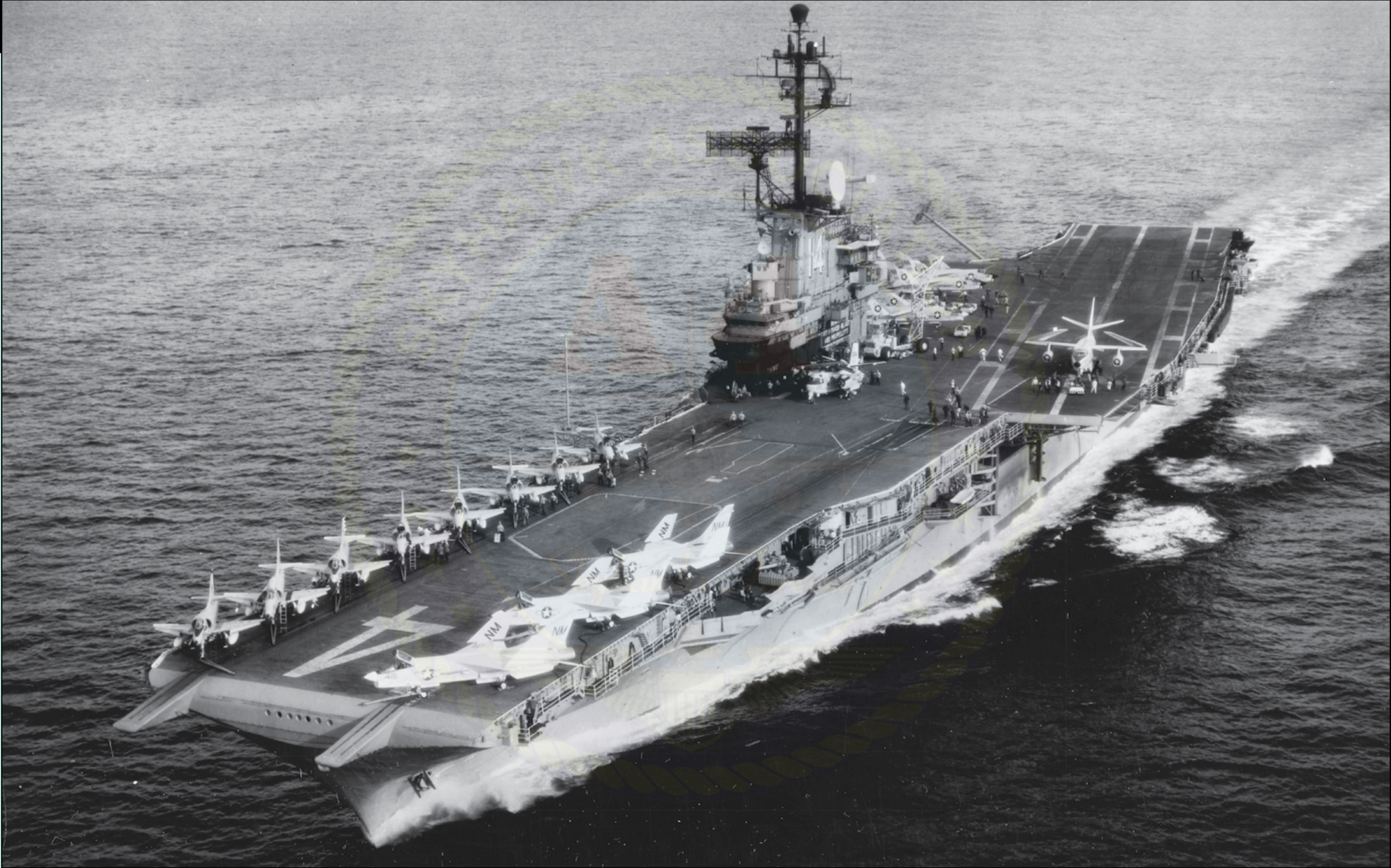
Each of the A-4Fs carried nine DST-36 "DESTRUCTOR" mines, and the A-4Cs had seven. The DST-36 was a Mk 82 bomb with a magnetic mine sensor in the nose fuse well. The sensor was connected to an electronic tail fuse that was fired when the sensor detected any metal object passing within about 150 feet.

We also had two A-4F "Iron Hand" aircraft, each loaded with two SHRIKE anti-radar missiles and four CBU-24 cluster bomb units. "Iron Hand" was the term used to describe the anti-radiation missile firing aircraft that killed or suppressed enemy radar guidance vans for surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) and anti-aircraft artillery (AAA) units. Iron Hand did not accompany us on this strike. They provided geographic coverage for our strike and another strike scheduled into our target area.

All major alpha strikes had dedicated Iron Hand, flak suppressors, and fighter cover. We lacked sufficient assets, however, to provide dedicated coverage for mini-alphas, interdiction, and armed reconnaissance strikes.

continued...

USS Ticonderoga (CVA-14) and Carrier Air Wing 19.



"Because of higher engine thrust, even with our two extra bombs, the A-4Fs had plenty of throttle left to keep up and maneuver."

The Mission. Interdict the flow of supplies supporting the NVA invasion of the South by mining a canal and roadway combination in the central part of North Viet Nam at 18°, 56' North, 105°, 18' East.

Brief and launch. We briefed at 0430 by completing the full strike leader check list that had been developed by CVW -16 and improved upon by CVW -19. (It is essentially the same check list taught today in the strike leader course at NAS Fallon, Nevada.) I was to fly wing on the CO, CDR Charlie Bush. We manned up at 0530 and launched at 0600. Due to a mix-up in the spot for the launch, I ended up in the CO's aircraft, and he in mine. Consequently, I inherited the only APR-25 radar warning receiver. It was still pitch black for the launch, but first light appeared during rendezvous at 18,000 feet.

Inbound. We had scattered clouds below and a broken layer above at about 24,000 feet. We climbed to about 23,000, and as we approached the limit of the first predicted SAM ring, we could clearly see the outline of the coast, rivers and ridges. Kipling had it right when he said that (in the tropics) "the dawn comes up like thunder."

CDR Sam Chessman, CO of VA-195, had the lead. For some strange reason that none of us comprehended, the SAM crews seemed to like to pick on Sam Chessman. Strike groups could go for several days with no SAM activity, but when he had the lead you could almost count on a launch of at least one SA-2 turning on your flashing "SAM" light. Hence he was called "Flashing Sam." Fortunately for all of us, he was also very adept at dodging SAMs, so he and his strike groups survived many encounters. This day was to be no exception.

Chessman's call sign was "Chippy One." The VA -192

aircraft were "Dragon" 1 and 2. Skipper Bush and I were "Law Case" 1 and 2. (In almost all reports and histories I have read, VA-23's call sign is recorded as "Lock Ace.") We spread out in our standard combat V formation with the sections of two aircraft 800 feet apart and stepped up or down in altitude by 400 feet. This was all based on the lethal radius of the SA-2 warhead, which was estimated at about 200 feet. The plan was to not lose more than one aircraft per warhead. The formation was also right for good lookout doctrine (to cover everyone's vulnerable 6 o'clock) and for separation to safely maneuver against a MiG attack.

The first warnings. Approaching the first probable SAM ring, Chippy One turned out his lights, pushed the throttle to 100% then backed off 2% to give his wingman enough advantage to maintain his position. Because of higher engine thrust, even with our two extra bombs, the A-4Fs had plenty of throttle left to keep up and maneuver.

The leader started a descent to arrive at the roll-in altitude for the bomb run (about 10,000 ft.) with ample speed for maneuver as we approached the target. We could normally get our speed up to 8 miles/minute, even with the heavy bomb load. We preferred 9-10 miles/minute and could attain that after the bombs were gone.

I was fascinated by all the activity on the APR-25 scope as we approached the beach. I had one, one-ring strobe pointing at the area just NW of Vinh Airfield (about 10 o'clock) and could hear the raw pulse-repetition frequency (PRF) of at least one BARLOCK. The "zit-zit," pause, "zit-zit" told me it was tracking us. Faintly, in the background, I could also hear the unmistakable "rattle-snake" sound of at least one FANSONG. (See the sidebar below discussing the dynamics of SAM launch and flight.)

continued...



SA-2 trajectory. These are very large missiles, and they leave a big footprint. (About 2/3 of the huge dust and smoke cloud from the launch is out of frame in the lower left corner.) After lift-off, the booster is still attached and leaves the familiar smoke trail shown here extending from the launch. This SAM site shut down when a SHRIKE was launched against it, so this is a ballistic shot detonating at right.

We could see them lift off from at least 12 -15 miles away. The better-trained NVA crews would normally shoot at about 12 miles. From that range the missile got there fast with plenty of energy left to maneuver. They could shoot from over 20 miles, but the missile lost some speed after engine burn-out prior to intercept, allowing the defending pilot more time to evade it.



SA-2 after staging. Once the booster drops off, the sustainer engine burn is very clean and leaves no smoke trail. But it has a long, bright red plume and stands out well against the dark rice paddies, karst ridges, and jungle forests, as seen in the lower left corner above. The missile body and plume are large enough that the defending pilot can (with rea-

sonable training or actual experience) quickly determine angle-off and know which way to turn to start the defensive maneuver. This missile is aimed well ahead of the photographer and pulling lead on the strike group leader. Consequently, this pilot's move is to turn left, take the photo, get behind the missile, and call turns for the intended target aircraft.



SA-2 warhead explosion. This is a fully developed SA-2 warhead explosion. The very recognizable international orange color comes from the red fuming nitric acid in the warhead and sustainer engine fuel. Sometimes when exiting from a target in the Red River Valley we could look up and see a dozen or more of these clouds left over from the missiles fired at us on the way in. This is a good illustration of how the exploded warhead looked when it was fully developed and before it dissipated.

" Within seconds the flashing 'SAM' light came on and the 'OODLE, OODLE, OODLE' sounded continuously."

Feet dry. Here they come!

Just as Chippy One reported "feet dry" (crossed the shore line) to strike control, my one strobe grew rapidly to two rings and the "rattlesnake" was singing loud and clear. Within seconds the flashing "SAM" light came on and the "OODLE, OODLE, OODLE" sounded continuously. I keyed the mike and said, "Chippy One, flashing SAM, check left, 10." The hairs on the back of my neck and arms stood on end as the huge rocket plumes and smoke trail of the boosters of two GUIDELINE II missiles rose above the ridge lines.

They were launched from a site between Vinh Airfield about 12-14 miles at 10 o'clock and the Tam Da bridge about 8 miles ahead at 11:30. We couldn't see the normal big dust and smoke cloud around the launch site because it was blocked by low clouds and part of the ridge line. We could clearly see the smoke trail end as the booster dropped off the lead missile, and then the second missile.

The long, red plumes of the sustainer engines stood out clearly against the dark rice paddies and ridge line. We all quickly calculated the angle-off. The first missile was pulling a good lead on Chippy One, so the Chippies started down and to their left in about a 120-degree banked turn. The "Dragons" followed the Chippies down, but let the separation between them and the Chippies open up.

Skipper Bush and I stayed high and turned left to keep the leader in sight. The SAMs turned back to their right toward Chippy One. As the lead SAM descended to intercept our leader, the Chippies turned their section back hard to the right to get inside the turn of the lead SAM. The wingman called out "Keep it turning Skipper, keep it turning!" We were fascinated by Chessman's skillful maneuvering as he started the two missiles into a right turn and then broke back to his right to get inside their turn radius.

At this point Skipper Bush and I were in a left turn and belly-up toward the west. All of a sudden I was aware of the rattlesnake sound from another FANSONG. It was louder than the first. I glanced at the APR-25 scope and saw a three-ringer strobe pointing at 2 o'clock. I immediately lost interest in

Sam's fight and got to work on ours. I dropped the right wing back down to level and looked down the strobe toward the ridges to our west.

There it was. A single GUIDELINE II had dropped the booster and was leveling off at our altitude. There was a bright red ring around the dark circle of the body of the SA-2, and it was dancing around the same spot on the canopy. It was close and there was no angle-off – it was clearly on a collision course. I screamed out to CDR Bush, "Skipper, break hard down and right NOW!" He didn't waste a second. As soon as the words came out, he pulled hard to his right into about a 5-G descending barrel roll. I followed.

The SAM warhead detonated a few hundred feet above the underside of my upside-down aircraft and the shock wave drove me down into the stiff padding of the ejection seat. The explosion had actually pushed the aircraft down into my butt, which was pointed toward the sky. Both the Skipper and I heard the loud "WHOMP" of the warhead explosion as the pressure wave hit us. We were very fortunate that Skipper Bush had responded so fast. We cleared the business end of the missile just enough that the shock wave hit us, but the warhead fragments carried beyond both our aircraft.

All three missiles had now exploded with no effect. Chippy One keyed the mike and said, "Okay, let's continue." We gathered the formation and continued to the target canal. We took a lot of pride in not letting the NVA SAM and flak crews turn us around, or force us to jettison our weapons. We would continue to the target regardless of the opposition.

A few rounds of 85 mm flak were fired at us near the roll-in point, but we delivered our DST-36s in the canal alongside the road.

(Ed. note: Meredith W. "Pat" Patrick's service in the U. S. Navy took him through many squadrons, ships, combat cruises and administrative assignments. He was CO of VA-27 and VA-122, and served in the Pentagon and the Center for Naval Analyses (CNA). He retired from the U. S. Navy in 1985 after 28 years and continued to work part time as a research analyst at the CNA.)

SKYHAWKS & SUBMARINES

By Boom Powell

Designed to deliver one bomb over long distances, by 1961 the Douglas Skyhawk had proven itself as a capable ground attack aircraft. While maintaining a nuclear strike capability, Navy and Marine VA and VMA squadrons' primary role had become destruction of land and sea targets with conventional ordnance. That year, the A-4's talents as an air-to-air fighter were first used in the VSF mission.

VSF = ASWFitRon = a squadron that would provide fighter aircraft to protect the specialized anti-submarine aircraft carriers (designated CVS from 1955 – 1973) from enemy air attacks. Although used officially for only a brief period, "VSF" is a convenient way of saying "fighters operating from an Anti-Sub-

marine Warfare (ASW) aircraft carrier" and will be used in this article. As some wit said, "Vee Ess Eff must mean Very Small Fighters."

Carrier-based ASW did not begin as a specialty. During WW2 all aircraft were used for Anti-Submarine patrols; even the fighters. By the Korean War, the increased capabilities of submarines demanded specialized aircraft to detect, track and combat them. The Grumman Avenger, which began life as a torpedo bomber, was heavily modified to become the first dedicated carrier-based ASW airplane. The large and short-lived AF Guardian, which operated in a team requiring two aircraft, followed before the multi-crew, multi-engine Grumman S2F Tracker dominated ship-based

ASW for the next two decades.

Specialized carrier air wings, CVSG, consisting of two VS (S2F) and an HS (helicopter) squadron plus detachments for early warning and ECM were created. A CVS with surface combatants and friendly submarines formed an ASW Task Group and usually operated far from air protection from shore or attack carriers, CVA. The threat from Soviet long-range maritime aircraft was significant and fighters as part of the CVSG was the answer.

The concept was developed on three deployments. VF(AW)-4 Det 50 operated F9F-5 Cougars from Antietam (CVS-36) in late 1956 before that carrier became the full-time training carrier in Pensacola. VA-44 had later



VA93 Det Q Skyhawk escorts a Soviet Tupolev Badger C while a VQ-1 EA-3B comes along for a look. (USN/ Krall)

model *Cougars* (F9F-8s) on *Wasp* (CVS-18) in late 1957 and Det N of VF-92 flew F2H-3 *Banshees* from *Yorktown* (CVS-10) October 1958 to May 1959. The fighter detachments worked well, and more were planned. However, the new, more capable fighter aircraft in the Navy inventory were also larger, heavier and faster. In 1960 all eight CVS had hydraulic catapults and limited deck space; they were simply not able to operate fighters like the *Demon*, *Skyray* or *Crusader*. Enter the A-4 *Skyhawk*.

The nicknames of the Douglas A-4, “Scooter,” “Tinker Toy,” and “Heinemann’s Hot Rod,” reflected its small size, light weight and agility. VA-34 provided the first detachment of *Skyhawks* (A4D-2/A-4B) during *Essex* (CVS-9) 1961 Atlantic deployment. The “Blue Blaster” *Skyhawks* carried a centerline fuel tank, two AIM-9 *Sidewinders*, and their two 20mm cannon for use in the air defense role. This load-out would remain standard. Eleven more detachments with A-4s on CVS followed.

VA-64 had a detachment of A-4Bs in *Wasp* February to June 1962 before the whole squadron embarked in *Independence* (CVA 62) for the Cuban quarantine.

VA-22 provided four A-4B *Skyhawks*, six pilots and forty-eight enlisted men (a typical VSF det size) aboard *Kearsarge* (CVS 33) June to December 1963. High-point of the Pacific deployment was recovery of space capsule *Faith 7* and astronaut Gordon Cooper.

The Marine Corps had their first det in 1963. Unfortunately, *Essex* was in a

horrific storm returning from the Med and the steel mast broke off the top of the island. One of the yardarms punched a hole through a H&MS-32 Det *Skyhawk* and the wooden flight deck. A plane load of jet fuel splashed over the flight deck and drained down into the hangar bay. Fortunately, there was no fire.

On the same deployment a Soviet Tu-95 *Bear* made several low altitude runs on *Essex*, misjudged a turn and crashed spectacularly into the sea within view of everyone on deck.

The “Black Sheep” of VMA-214 went to

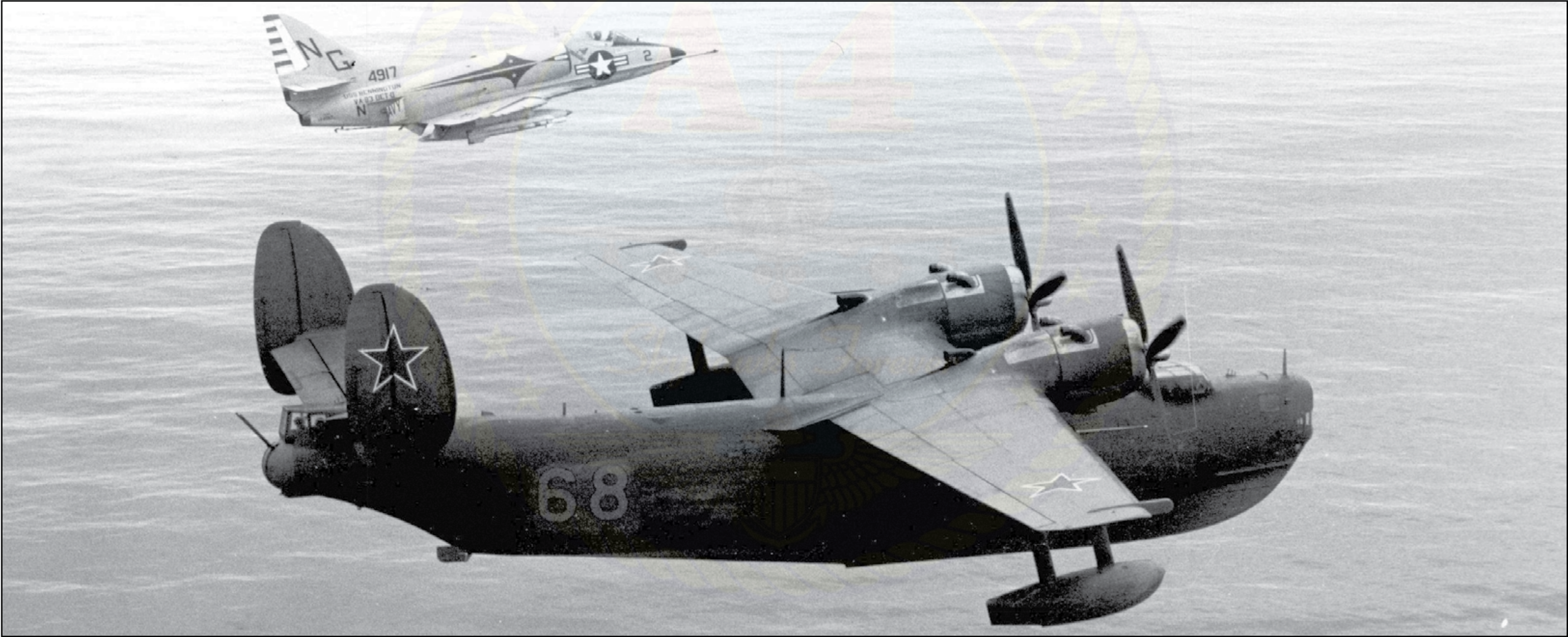
WestPac in *Hornet* (CVS-12) as part of CVSG-57 October 1963 to April 1964, with A-4Bs.

The VA-34 “Blue Blasters” had overlapping dets in *Randolph* (CVS-15) and *Intrepid* (CVS-11) from late 1963 into 1964.

The *Skyhawks* turned out to be useful in the ASW role as well. With their speed they could search wide areas, or speed out to a contact much faster than the S-2. Nor did submarines expect a threat from high altitude. The *Scooter* pilots carried cam-

eras and became proficient at low passes to rig ships.

VA-93 had Det Q in *Bennington* (CVS-20) February to September, 1964. Bob Krall (who later was assigned to NARF Alameda and flew 637 different *Skyhawks* 1961-68) said, “The deployment at Yuma shooting at a banner towed by a T2V *Seastar* didn’t produce any results that the det pilots could brag about at a fighter pilot bar. Regardless of bore-sighting, the A-4 guns were not suited for air to air gunnery.”



Beriev Be6 Madge intercepted by LCDR Randall on 16 July, 1964. As a spoof, VA93 Det Q painted their noses black as if they had radar. The tail below the horizontal stab was also painted black to look like tail-warning radar. Note the A-4B is nose high to stay with the conventional engine Madge. (USN/ Krall)



VA93 Det Q OinC LCDR Tom Randall is shown flying A-4B over Mt Fuji, 1 May 1964. (USN/Krall)

VA-153 Det R in *Kearsarge* made a fast turn in December 1964 to join the parent “Bluetail” squadron for deployment to WestPac in *Coral Sea* (CVA-43).

The “Stingers” of VA-113 formed Det Q for *Bennington* in 1965. Marc Pierce, who later would join VSF-1, remembers training with the RAG, VF-124, in Miramar; A-4s against F-8s with a TF-9 *Cougar* that towed the target for air-to-air gunnery. “Even with a fixed gunsight, the *Skyhawk* pilots did better than the *Crusaders* with lead computing sights, although experienced pilots versus replacements new in the aircraft may have had something to do with it.”

Like all the CVS (except *Intrepid*) at the time, *Bennington* had hydraulic catapults restricting the A-4 to only a 150 gallon centerline tank with two

AIM-9 missiles. During the deployment to WestPac, VA-113 Det had the unique opportunity to be the first *Skyhawk* to land aboard the Australian aircraft carrier, HMS *Melbourne*. (Later, the Australian navy operated A-4 squadrons of its own.) With the situation in Vietnam getting tense, VA-113’s Det also did a fast turn to go aboard *Kittyhawk* (CVA-63) with the rest of the squadron in October 1965, for early strikes into North Vietnam.

The same year VMA-223 “Bulldogs” Det T of A-4Cs finished a deployment in *Yorktown* and immediately moved to the new Marine base at Chu Lai.

Marine Air Group 15’s Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron deployed to the Tonkin Gulf in *Hornet* as 1965 became 1966. The six pilots flew bomb

strikes from *Ticonderoga* (CVS-14), *Midway* (CVA-41) and *Ranger* (CVA-61) as well as their carrier protection mission, and all became *Hornet* centurions. On a wry note, their A-4Cs were named for ladies of dubious reputation: Fanny Hill, Polly Adler, Ko Sisters and Mamie Stover. (See sidebars.)

The importance of the VSF mission justified the creation of a specialized, large squadron which would provide a detachment for each CVS. Protection of ASW task groups would be the primary mission instead of the temporary additional role it had been. *Anti-Submarine Warfare Fighter Squadron One* was established 1 July 1965, at NAS Lemoore. Plank owners were CDR Waring, LTJg John Chernowski, and a dozen enlisted men. The squadron would be based at NAS Alameda and operate A-4Bs.

Sidebar: The Saga of A-4C BuNo147681

Not only did the Marines of H&MS-15 Det N on *Hornet* (CVS-12) paint names in florid script on the noses of their four A-4C *Skyhawks*, but used the names of women of dubious morality. 1965 obviously was a time before “political correctness” was invented, publicity releases from the det appeared in *NavNews* and other publications. What do you think the reaction of the intercepted Soviet air crews was when they read the names?
BuNo 147681, YV 81 Fanny Hill
BuNo 147809, YV 82 Polly Adler
BuNo 147829, YV 83 Mamie Stover
BuNo 148464, YV 84 Ko Sisters

For those who have led sheltered lives and/or are of a newer generation, here’s the story on the ladies:
Fanny Hill — the 1749 book is subtitled *Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure*. Considered the first erotic novel, it has become a byword for censorship controversy.
Polly Adler — New York City madame in the 1930s. Famous for entry scenes at Manhattan nite clubs with her girls.
Mamie Stover — a woman of dubious morals forced to leave San Francisco for Hawaii in a 1956 novel. Suggestive mostly because of the movie version with Jane Russell.
Ko Sisters — Japanese women’s names tend to end in “ko” and since most Marines did not have much command of Japanese, it was a standard way to refer to Michiko, Fumiko, Sajiko, Akiko and the other girls who worked in the O’Club at Iwakuni and the bars in town.



“Ko Sisters” coming out of a parking spot on *Hornet* during the August 1965-- March 1966, WestPac deployment. The name is faint either because it was done in grease pencil prior to painting or had been partially erased, due to some command sensitivity. (Hook/USN?)

Sidebar: Woman of Pleasure Becomes the Mount of VA-94 CO.

The history of 147681 is well documented. One of 181 A4D-2N *Skyhawks* in the second production batch of 1960, she was initially assigned to the VA-192 “World Famous Golden Dragons.”
In May, 1965, BuNo 147681 was assigned to Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron 15 (H&MS-15) at El Toro, California. Assigned to Det N, she deployed in *Hornet* in August ’65 and was named “Fanny Hill.” In February 1966, she went to Atsugi, Japan, and on to NAS Cubi Point, Philippines, for major maintenance.
LTJg Baldock of VA-94 was flying his skipper’s airplane, NG401, when the tail of A-4C BuNo 147740 was blown off by a SAM south of Vinh (He became a POW and returned in 1973). The CO of the VA-94 “Mighty Shrikes” was Commander Otto Krueger (*Skyhawk* Association plank-owner and past-president), and BuNo 147681 came aboard *Enterprise* as the replacement NG401. The former ‘Fanny Hill’ finished the combat cruise and returned with the squadron to NAS Lemoore.

After VA-94, BuNo 147681 served with the VA-34 Blue Blasters, VA-66 Waldomen, VA-44 Hornets, VA-12 Flying Ubangis and ended her career with the VA-305 Hackers at Los Alamitos, California. The A-4C *Skyhawk* was finally sent to MASDAC Davis-Monthan in May, 1971, for recycling. Hopefully, some of her aluminum became a cocktail shaker. So when you drink a Martini, think of Fanny Hill.

SKYHAWKS & SUBMARINES

continued...



H&M-15 – front row, from the left: Cpl R. T. Ledford, Sgt C. A. Rhyne, Sgt D. A. Miller, Sgt J. J. Farrington, Cpl J. Jones, Cpl G. D. Bush, and SSgt J. C. Willems. Standing, same order: LCpl J. A. Heinemann, LCpl B. A. Cahmberlain, LCpl G. F. Gabriel, LCpl C. E. Goodhead, LCpl D. K. Clark, LCpl D. S. Nichols, and LCpl R. W. Ingram.

Marines of H&M-15 Det in Hornet with A-4C “Fanny Hill,” showing unusual (and seemingly “research proof”) VMA-22 marking on the fuselage. (A4 Assoc/USN)

The first VSF commanding officer was CDR Charles E. Waring who had been a flying midshipman out of the V12/V5a program. He had flown sixty-five missions in F4U-4 *Corsairs* in Korea in VF-54 from both *Philippine Sea* (CVA-47) and *Valley Forge* (CVA-45) when the ships swapped airwings. He made *Midway’s* round-the-world cruise in VF-174 flying F9F *Cougars* and was XO of VA-155 with A-4A/Bs in WestPac in *Coral Sea*. Recently promoted after 2 ½ years in Izmir, Turkey, with the Sixth Allied Tactical Air Force, the commander detailer assured him that VSF was a “good deal.”

The first pilots went through an abbreviated syllabus in Lemoore (Since Waring was already A-4 qualified, he left VA-125 after only two refresher hops) and included a former P2V *Neptune* pilot who did not go through the RAG at all. (He was later killed in a ramp strike after finessing orders to a VA squadron.) Later pilots went through the entire attack/nuke delivery syllabus with the bonus of earning per diem while in Lemoore as their final orders were to NAS Alameda.

The eagle head in the squadron insignia was adapted from the Waring family silverware with green slashes added to match the painted portion of the A-4’s rudder. Waring argued that as a fighter squadron, VSF-1 should have red as the squadron color. Although the powers-that-be decreed otherwise, the skipper’s airplane always seemed to have red where the rest of the squadron was painted green.

Aircraft side numbers were two digits beginning with the CO’s 70 and eventually reaching into the 90s while the letter code was NA. Squadron jesters claimed it stood for “Not Applicable.”

Waring was a skipper from the old school. Howie Fowler, Fred Kasch and YHS (Powell) all arrived in Alameda from VA-125 at the same time. Waring welcomed us nuggets by putting us on the next day’s flight schedule. No chase, no old hand, just the three of us. We took turns leading. Howie’s family was from near Mt Shasta so



H&M-15 Det N

we flew up to say hello. Fred and I were tucked in tight when over the radio came, “On count of three we pull up.” I looked forward to see green trees and steep cliffs filling the Scooter’s windscreen.

A SAR helicopter crew had rescued an injured Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) and taken the bird back to NAAS Fallon. Navy corpsmen removed the birdshot, but its wing was damaged and sustained flight impossible. Since the hawk could not be released to the wild, the folks at Fallon kept it. As with all large birds, there were sanitary and feeding problems.

The Commanding Officer of Fallon, Capt Oliver, was wondering what to do with his charge when the brand new VSF-1 arrived for weapons training. Emblazoned proudly on flight jackets and A-4B airplanes was the squadron patch inspired by the first CO’s family crest—an eagle head *en profile on fesse vert*.

A hawk looks like an eagle, especially a stylized one. And the squadron flew *Skyhawks*. Perfect. A small ceremony was arranged, with photographers, and the hawk was officially presented as the mascot for VSF-1. How could the CO, Charlie Waring, refuse?

The sex of the bird was never determined, but it was soon named “Charlie Eagle.” The airframes shop built a large cage and placed

it at the back of the ready room on the second deck. Charlie’s diet was typically raw liver with an occasional lizard that Maintenance Officer Phil Dougherty’s nine kids caught. Charlie’s gory mouse meals became a part of initiating new men into the squadron.

The door to his cage was usually left open and Charlie would hop onto chair backs and up to the top of the cage. From there he would occasionally launch for the front of the room, hit the waxed linoleum deck and skid into the wall. These “flights” went into the squadron log as “arrested landings” for Charlie. At even odder times, Charlie would target the SDO at his desk. Looking up into the outstretched talons of a hawk was a thrill most of the junior officers were subjected to. Mercifully there were no injuries—to bird or JO.

Eager to develop the fighter mission, Charlie Waring arranged weapons detachments to NAAS Fallon and MCAS Yuma, set up ACM practice, fired AIM-9 *Sidewinders* and had “Rudolf” built. Rudolf was an A-4B (BuNo 145002) that had an F-8 air-to-air radar “borrowed” from the China Lake Weapons Center and installed by NARF Alameda. The unique, longer nose (modified from a F-11 *Tiger’s*) was painted red and the name followed soon after. What was intended as the prototype for future VSF fighters had not been approved by higher authority. Nor was taking Rudolf on the CarQual sessions the pilots of VSF-1 had on *Kearsarge* and *Hornet*. Waring himself flew Rudolf’s first trap.

Six pilots and the maintenance crew of the first detachment were ready to go aboard *Yorktown* when the deployment was cancelled in the spring of 1966.

A rare photo of BuNo 145002 which, after modification, should have become the YFA-4B. Late on 28 Oct 1966, Clay Jansson took one photo then was asked to not shoot that airplane, so he moved to the next and kept “Rudolf” in the frame. The sensitivity was probably more about the unapproved modifications than any classified equipment.



CDR Charlie Waring is shown holding the hawk “Charlie Eagle” in VSF-1 Ready Room at NAS Alameda, 1965.



After a dozen deployments of A-4s as fighters (VSF) aboard ASW carriers (CVS) by Navy VA and Marine VMA and H&MS detachments, a specialized and dedicated VSF squadron had been formed and was based at NAS Alameda. By 1966, the first VSF-1 detachment was within days of deploying in *Yorktown* when the all-stop message arrived. The war in Southeast Asia was intensifying and more *Skyhawks* as attack aircraft were needed. An Atlantic Fleet VA squadron would go to WestPac in a swap for VSF-1 deploying to the Med in November, 1966, as a normal attack squadron. With a large number of pilots and aircraft in the pipeline for VSF-1, a second attack squadron would also be formed, although both would keep the VSF designation.

The shift to becoming an attack squadron began immediately with a weapons Det to NAS Fallon and bombing and rocket practice at NALF Crows Landing, just across the mountains in the San Joaquin Valley. VSF-1 also used Crows Landing for FCLP before heading east to join CVW-8 at NAS Cecil Field, FL.

Four pilots including ex-NavCad Al Cartwright went to Billy Phillip's Airwing 19 to replace pilots he was less than happy with. Cartwright said leaving VSF-1 was hard; not because he was headed to WestPac, but Waring was so good to work for. Several "combat limited", ie, combat deployment veterans, arrived to fill the vacant slots.

VSF-1 in the Med

After six weeks of workups on the East Coast, *Shangri La* departed Norfolk on 29 September 1966. On board were the 'War Eagles' of VSF-1 with fourteen A-4B *Skyhawks*. The tail code was now the AJ of Airwing 8 and nose numbers began with 570-- this did cut down on repainting, at least on the port side. The sister light attack squadron was the Sunliners of VA-81 with A-4Es.

The maintenance department had a one-legged warrant officer. Griff Hudson had been struck by a broken wire while working the flight deck on *Constellation* and had worked to pass the physical tests necessary to return to sea duty.

Other than a junior pilot landing hard enough to break the wing of an A-4 during a dive-for-deck at night, the time in the Med was typical in support of 6th Fleet operations. All the pilots became *Shang* centurions. Cdr Donald K. Wilson assumed command while in Palermo, Sicily, 14 April, 1967. Soon after, CVA-38 returned to Norfolk, and VSF-1 flew back to NAS Alameda.



VSF-1



VSF-1 deployed to the Mediterranean on *Shangri La* from November 1966 to May, 1967 as an attack squadron with sixteen A-4B Skyhawks. Side numbers at first began with 570 and were later changed to a conventional 500 series; the squadron color remained green.



VSF-1 division overflies *Shangri La* in 1966

SKYHAWKS & SUBMARINES

continued...

VSF-3 is Formed

While VSF-1 was at sea half-a-world away, VSF-1 Det Alameda had grown larger than its parent organization. The result was administrative mayhem. The problem was solved in March, 1967, when VSF-3 was established, and Cdr Leslie C. Hofto went from XO of VSF-1, to OinC of Det Alameda, to CO of VSF-3.

Les Hofto began his flying career in AD *Skyraiders* and was assigned to CVG-7 staff as LSO. He made a Med deployment before going to combat in Korea in *Bon Homme Richard* (CVA-31). He then extended for three months to assist CVG-15/*Princeton* (CVA-37) LSOs who were unfamiliar with jets. Hofto later was senior LSO in *Bennington* for the legendary recovery of three carriers' aircraft with no divert and lousy weather in the North Atlantic during Operation Mariner. He first flew A-4s in VA-22. After a DC tour he found himself in the doldrums, but with a fun assignment as the director of the Navy/Marine Corps Exhibit at the 1964 New York World's Fair. His detailer's call with assignment to VSF-1 was as confusing as it was for most. (As a red-hot jet pilot with shiny new wings, the author's heart stopped in the pause between hearing "Vee Ess" and "Eff One" for my first squadron.)

VSF-3 was on the TV news and made headlines, "Navy Bombs Oakland!" after a Mk-76 practice bomb fell into one of the few vacant lots in the city. A flight of four had taken

off from NAS Alameda and as 3# closed in, he asked, "Two, how many bombs did you have when you took off?"

"Six." Pause, "Why?"

"Well, you only have five now."

Additional proof of VSF standing for "Very Screwy Fellas" was assignment to CVW-10 and *Intrepid* (CVS(A)-11). Airwing Ten, the "Valions" of VA-15 and VA-34 "Blue Blazers"—A-4C squadrons—were at NAS Cecil Field. *Intrepid* was in Norfolk.

Lessons learned in Vietnam dictated increased ECM capabilities and the "Shoehorn" installation had been developed for the A-4. Aptly named for the difficulty of finding space for the magic black boxes (The hump was added to later A-4s to make room for the avionics), the modification took out the port cannon and left the other only 40 rounds. BuNo 154002 was among the *Skyhawks* reworked at NARF Alameda. It came out as a standard A-4B and "Rudolf" was no more.

With the parent squadron now deployed, VSF-1 Det made two ten day visits to Fallon for weapons practice and had a CarQual session in *Bon Homme Richard*. After becoming VSF-3, there was a CQ in *Kearsarge* before joining *Intrepid* in Norfolk. Work-ups continued for the next two months with little chance for time in Alameda. Finally, the squadron airplanes were taxied down roads from NAS Norfolk to the naval base and hoisted aboard *Intrepid* for the voyage to war—the long way.

VSF-3 Deployed

Middle East tensions were high, and Jordan had signed a treaty with Egypt while *Intrepid* was in the Eastern Mediterranean. Aircraft were armed and crews put on alert. After several days of uncertainty, CVS(A)-11 entered the Suez Canal. All hands were restricted from the weather decks for the transit. Although there were overflights by Egyptian fighters and troops were seen, the worst the Egyptians did was display banners and shake their shoes at the ship. The Arab-Israeli Six Day War began two days later. *Intrepid* became the last warship to go through the canal until it was reopened in 1975.

The two week transit was filled with All Pilot Meetings for training and briefings. Two a day was the norm and for VSF-3, usually ended the same way. The new squadron needed an insignia and sketches of half a dozen would be presented and discussed. The selection would be whittled down to two with a final choice to be made the next day. By the next day, the choices were back up to five or six. The final compromise was a knight chess-piece on a checkered field with red jags to match the airplane tails. The agreed on name was "Chessmen." The callsign had been "Nevada City" from the beginning and was used by both VSF-1 and VSF-3. There is a Nevada City in the Sierra foothills, and pilots from both squadrons would fly low levels to check out the namesake.

After a brief stop in Cubi Point, VSF-3 entered combat for the first time on 21 June, 1967. The veterans of VA-15 who had been in *Intrepid* the previous year for her first Vietnam deployment (she would make three), assumed operations would again begin on Dixie Station and eventually work north. They were wrong. The air war the summer of 1967 had VSF-3 over North Vietnam for their first missions, over the Haiphong suburbs by the end of the first line period and over the Big Hs (Hanoi and Haiphong) themselves by the second line period.

Many aircraft came back with battle damage, but only two aircraft were lost. LTJG Fred Kasch was also the squadron's only fatality. In early July, he was hit by AAA over Hai Duong and crashed while trying to glide his flamed-out *Skyhawk* to the safety of the Tonkin Gulf. His wingman, ex-NavCad Dick Harriss, heard him call, "I'm at 500 feet," and told him to get out, but there was no apparent ejection. The Navy listed him as MIA until his remains were returned in 1989. Kasch was flying 145002, the A-4B that was once "Rudolf."

In October, LTJG Al Perkins was hit by AAA while on a flak suppression mission over Haiphong. Perkins was wounded in the leg and could barely control his airplane. He jettisoned his



VSF-3

canopy in an attempt to clear the dense smoke which was keeping him from seeing his instruments and was either hit again or his engine exploded. He ejected and landed in Haiphong Harbor. An HU-2K helicopter from HC-1 picked him up yards away from an enemy ship. At the time, it was the deepest rescue from the harbor.

Once in WestPac, although *Intrepid* picked up a VFP-63 Photo-Crusader detachment and VF-111 provided three F-8Cs and pilots to fly photo escort, VSF-3 was considered the resident fighter squadron. The squadron color was red, Ready Room 1# (nearest the flight deck) was assigned—to be shared with the 'Sader pilots—and flight deck alerts during ship transits were stood by an A-4B with a centerline fuel tank and a pair of AIM-9 Sidewinders.

On 5 October, 1967, the *Skyhawks* of CVW-10 encountered MiGs in force. A 27 plane Alfa strike had launched against a target near the airfield of Kien An. During egress half the strike group ran into MiGs. Dick Harriss was first aware of the MiGs when he saw tracers coming down at him. He fired at the overshooting MiG, but saw no hits and out of ammo, headed for the water. The official account of the action is typically confused, but at least six different MiG-17s were involved.

CDR Georges LeBlanc, XO of VSF-3, maneuvered close behind a MiG and squeezed the trigger. His one cannon fired once and jammed. He called for his wingman, LTJG Dan Swinford, to close in, but Swinford had no radio. They broke off and cleared the area.

The Airwing 10 operations officer, Ed Gilreath, was flying VSF-3's AK107 and when he heard the MiG warnings he held the rockets he had for flak suppression and headed for Kien An. His wingman, LTJG D. 'Huey' L'Herauld in AK105, had fired all his rockets at the assigned target and describes what followed:

As we circled behind the strike group of Intrepid A4s to follow them "feet wet", I made the initial visual of a single MiG 17 at about 10:00 low....we were at about 300 kts. and 5-6000 ft. As I was in trail on Ed at full power he called to



Red-tailed VSF-3 and VA-34 and VA-15 Skyhawks on the bow of Intrepid during CVS-11's second deployment as an attack carrier to the Tonkin Gulf.



VSF-3 A-4B on fighter alert with two Sidewinders during Intrepid transit to or from Yankee Station in 1967.



arm up our guns and he turned hard left and initiated a dive toward the MiG. It then turned hard right and as we made a reversal to follow I glanced behind me and there were 3 MiG 17s, flying a loose formation, directly behind me firing tracer cannon fire directly at me. I called Ed to break hard right and from there I ended up in a one v. three for three reversals, somehow avoiding their bullets. In the midst of this engagement I saw Ed only one time and it was to see a stream of 2.75" rockets fill the air (AK107 had fired eight Zuni 5" rockets and 20mm cannon earlier) as he made an almost head-on pass at the three guys concentrating on me. When the MiGs split with 2 guys going high and one going low Ed called to jettison all externals (fuel tanks, racks and rocket packs) and we headed directly out to sea. At full speed with about 1500# of gas left we went right down on the deck and I remember seeing an airspeed of over 550 knots.

Last missions were flown the end of November, 1967. Most of the flight crews would fly home on a "Magic

Carpet" airliner from Clark AFB. A few unlucky officers and most of the men would remain onboard for the month-long voyage across the Indian Ocean, around the Cape of Good Hope, across the South and North Atlantic to Norfolk. Due to a jurisdictional quirk, those pilots due to airlift back could not depart until *Intrepid* chopped back to the Atlantic Fleet somewhere in the Indian Ocean. They spent a boring week at Cubi playing touch-football early in the morning before it got too hot, followed by swimming and afternoon naps. At least, they could go to the club for a legal drink and... they were not getting shot at.

1968

The decision to stand-down VSF-3 was made while the squadron was in the Tonkin Gulf, and all the pilots guessed that they would be sent to A-4 or A-7 fleet squadrons since they had only the one combat deployment. However, BuPers considered all the time in VSF, including time at Alameda for those who were VSF-1 or the Det, as sea duty

and distribution was varied with about half going to sea-going squadrons. Alameda-based VA-152 had returned from WestPac in *Oriskany* (CVA-34) and was transitioning from A-1 *Skyraiders* to A-4 *Skyhawks*. A cadre of pilots transferred from VSF-3, and at one point, VA-152 owned a dozen Spads and a mix of fourteen Bravo and Charlie *Skyhawks*. Other ex-VSF-3 A-4Bs went to the Navy Reserves, and many were reworked and sent to Argentina where they flew in the Falklands War.

VSF-1 Med Deploy II & III

CDR Donald K. Wilson assumed command of VSF-1 on 14 April, 1967, while in Palermo, Sicily. Soon after, CVA-38 returned to Norfolk, and VSF-1 flew back to NAS Alameda.

By August, VSF-1 was transitioning to the A-4C. The second cruise began in April 1968 with CDR Marty Asbacher as the new CO. The "War Eagles" spent their second Christmas deployed--in Athens this time--but still were consistently the flying-est squadron aboard *Independence*.

In late 1968, *Wasp* was operating in the Mediterranean, and VSF-1, as well as VA-76, provided a temporary detachment which was never very far from the parent squadrons. One wonders what the pilots used to *Independence* thought when they went to the much smaller *Hornet* with hydraulic catapults.

Blair Stewart became the next--and last--CO of VSF-1. Back in Alameda early in 1969, there was a 50% percent turnover of pilots and a batch of new *Skyhawks*. The training situation was complicated because VSF-1 was to revert to its original mission in January, as well as remaining committed to CVW-7 in a contingency status. During work-ups with *Independence* the squadron received extra personnel to accommodate the *Yorktown* detachment. *Independence* and *Yorktown* left together for NATO exercise "Operation Peacekeeper" in the North Atlantic. The VSF-1 Det intercepted a Soviet *Bear* two days before the actual exercise, and the only deployment of VSF in its intended role was underway.

During the subsequent visit to Portsmouth, England, in September, word of VSF-1's disestablishment arrived. The Det stayed out until 11 December. With VSF-3 stood down two years before, by the first day of 1970, no ASWFitRon existed as a frontline unit.

Reserves as VSF

VSF-11X1 and -11X2 were created on paper in July, 1968, at NAS New Orleans as part of the reorganization of the Naval Reserve. Flying A-4B *Skyhawks*, these squadrons were to be full-sized, but then were cut to only four pilots. They went through another shake-up of the Reserves and another set of designations before settling on VSF-76 and VSF-86, to be fully manned with A-4C/L "Scooters." While no full deployments were made, the "Flying Saints" and the "Gators" did two-week AcDuTra cruises in *Wasp*, *Ticonderoga* (recently designated CVS-14) and *Randolph* in 1971.

Ed Moir was in that group:

Our squadron was stood up as VSF-86, part of NAS North Island-based CAG 80 (CDR Tom Stanley). Our "fighters" were A-4Cs, with high-temperature J-65 engines. We flew with centerline tanks only or sometimes "slick." Not bad performance for a Scooter, but it weren't no fighter. Anyway, we had fun and the mission was super; hassling and more hassling. The flight deck on *Tico*, despite no recent jet experience, did a great job.

We held our change of command ceremony in *Ticonderoga* at sea in the San Diego operating area. Sierra Hotel! The first Navy Reserve change-of-command held at sea. Incidentally, the incoming CO, Tammy Etheridge, later made rear-admiral, as did a squadron member, Dave Griggs.

The embarrassment of a Cuban airliner landing unannounced at New Orleans Airport, prompted the local congressman to get both reserve VSF squadrons six



Pilots of VSF-86 during carquals on Tico. L-R: John "Monster" Parks, Ed Moir, Dave Griggs (later astronaut and Rear Admiral), Dale Sisely.



VA-45 Det-1 Humpbacked A-4 Echo on final approach. 1972. [USN/Alvarez]



F-8H *Crusaders*—the first fighter in the VSF role since VF-92 *Banshees* in 1959. The powers that be decided not to CarQual the reserves in the F8, and with approximately one pilot for each *Crusader*; it was a flying club of the first order. The fun lasted a little over a year, but with the CV concept in effect and no CVS left, VSF-76 and VSF-86 were disestablished in 1973. Personnel and aircraft became the core for today's VC-13.

Blackbirds as ASWFitRon

Unlike most pilots, LT Larry "Worm" Elmore was not confused by orders to "VSF" (a simple term and easy to use) duty. After cruising with the notorious Youthly Puresome as a "Snake" (VA-86), he had left active duty, tried the airlines in the hire-to-fast-furlough era, joined the reserves where he, "...was flying my buns off in A4Cs from Los Al and Point Mugu," when he got a call from CDR John Paganelli, his OpsO in VA-86 and then the skipper of VA-45. He asked Worm to come back on active duty to be the LSO and Ops O of the A-4C Det that was going to deploy in *Intrepid*. The original OinC cancelled and Elmore had the job. As he says, "It turned out to be the best deal I had in 20 years in the Navy."

Intrepid and VA-45 Det-11 left Norfolk in April and returned mid-October, 1971. She made only one run into the Mediterranean. Most operations were in the North Atlantic, including "Blue Nose" forays above the Arctic Circle—stomping grounds for the Soviet Northern Fleet. Ports of call were Lisbon, Kiel, Naples, Cannes, Barcelona, Hamburg, Copenhagen, Greenock, Rosyth, Portsmouth and Bergen. Det-11 made over 125 intercepts on Russian *Bears*, *Badgers*, *Blinders*, several Soviet fighters and bagged more hours and traps than a typical pilot on a Med deployment. A best deal indeed.

There were so many intercepts that some of the snoopers became familiar. Worm joined on a Bear (Tu-95) whose tail gunner was friendly and would wave and hold up the box lunch he was eating (yes, Elmore was that close). He once held up a sign in English that said, "How do you do?" A few days later, Elmore

held up a sign in Russian that said, "Come on back with me." The Russian had a good laugh.

Det-11 was doing so well that in August, 1971, VA-45 Det-1 was established with A-4Es for a follow-on *Intrepid* deployment. LCDR Raoul Alvarez was the OinC. Det-11 returned in November, turned in their seven A-4 Charlies and disbanded the following month. At the start of 1972 an increase in size was authorized with the intention of splitting off Det-2 for deployment on the remaining PacFlt CVS, *Ticonderoga*. This did not happen.

After a CarQual session on CVT-16 *Lexington*, Det-1 took five A-4Es to sea in *Intrepid* in March and April of 1972 for an exercise with the Spanish and Portuguese navies. At Cecil, command of the mother-squadron went from Paganelli to Joe Gilmore. The Det left 9 July as part of CVSG-56 with three S-2 "Stoof" and a helo squadron.

While some pilots worried about "missing the war", Al Alvarez had flown *Skyraiders* in combat as a VA-145 *Swordsman* in *Intrepid*. Interestingly, considering his assignment to the VA-45 VSF Detachment, VSF-3 was also onboard *Intrepid* as part of CVW-10. He then instructed in VT-21 as it transitioned to the TA-4 before joining the *Blackbirds*.

A major change came in August, 1972. During October and November of the previous year, on the way home after a Med cruise, *Saratoga* added VS-28 and HS-7 to Airwing 3 and operated in the vicinity of Bermuda. The combined airwing was tasked with anti-submarine duty, convoy escort and short and long range strikes against sea and land targets. Although *Saratoga* was designated CV-60 on 30 June, 1972, the practical transition from CVA to CV was interrupted by final efforts in Vietnam. To support *Linebacker II*, LantFlt carriers *Saratoga* and *America* (CVA-66) made emergency deployments to the Tonkin Gulf. In order to meet the requirement for two carriers with attack squadrons in the Mediterranean, ComNavAirLant, ADM Michaelis, boosted VA-45 Det-1 to a sixteen airplane unit with the missions of conventional and nuclear attack, all

while continuing task group air defense. The Chief of Naval Personnel authorized new CDR Alvarez, who had screened for an A-7 squadron, to wear the Command-at-Sea insignia since his position was the equivalent of a squadron command. And a difficult one at that.

Intrepid's North Atlantic deployment was cut short and Det-1 was back at Cecil on October 19. As CDR Alvarez later wrote:

The unique situation under which this unit made its transformation from a 7-officer, 65-man, 5-plane VSF Detachment to a 27-officer, 210-man, 16-plane multi-purpose command in 10 weeks shows again that the Navy still "Can Do." Again, it was the American Bluejacket, with his bitching and swearing about 18-hour days and 7-day work weeks, that got the job done. To say that this command is unique is only saying that not since WWII has one unit been asked to build up so fast and take on the full bag of missions in such a short time.

The commanding officer of parent-squadron VA-45, Paganelli and his successor, Joe Gilmore, also deserve credit for the transition. At NAS Cecil, VA-45 began training pilots and acquiring A-4Es for the build up while the small Det was still at sea; all while continuing instrument and transition training with sixteen TA-4F/Js. Remarkably, by June 1973, the squadron had achieved 34,000 accident-free flying hours. The expanded Det-1 was ready when *Intrepid* deployed again November 29, 1972. VA-45 Det-1 returned in May, 1973, from Sixth Fleet operations on what was the swan song of VSF.

The *Kittyhawk* (CV-63) went to a peacetime WestPac cruise in 1975 with the last two fleet squadrons of S-2s. From then on S-3 *Vikings* were an integral part of all airwings. Two VF squadrons with F-4s or F-14s would defend the task force. VSF was no more.



Ed. Note: Part I of this article was included in the Spring 2006 issue of the A-4Ever. To order a copy of that issue (\$5 shipping and handling), email the editor at hickers@beecreek.net. Members have access to electronic copies of the journals through the Ready Room Private Pages (www.skyhawk.org).



VA-45 Fly-off

Al Alvarez, who had led VA-45 Det-1 on a three month deployment with a small detachment and again as a full size squadron to the Med for six months in *Intrepid*, wrote this about the fly-off and return to Cecil Field in May 1973:

The picture was taken 10 miles west of NAS Cecil Field by the number 15 man who dropped into the open slot after photo was taken.

It was a very rewarding day. The USS *Intrepid* fly-off destination was NAS Quonset PT. Admiral Cassell, our former CARGRU commander, had every fuel truck on the field waiting for

us. We fueled and filed and were on our way in less than an hour. The flight south was uneventful and Jax approach joined up the divisions west of Cecil for the fly-over. We broke from the wedge on the fly-over pass and landed sequentially in order by aircraft side number. Then we taxied in, fifteen aircraft, in column, and turned into our parking spots "Blue Angels" style.

I was especially proud of Det 1 that day and will always keep it in my memories.

On the launch we lost the 16th aircraft due to a catapult malfunction. Halfway down the starboard cat track, the bridle dropped off the aircraft. The A-4 veered left and went overboard at

the corner of the port bow. Unfortunately, the aircraft carried overboard one of the flight deck bridle-runners and he was lost at sea.

The pilot ejected as the aircraft was about to go over the side and landed on the flight deck with a fully deployed parachute. Thank God for explosive spreaders [to open the parachute giving the Escapac seat a better than zero-zero ejection capability —Ed]. The next problem was that he was being dragged down the flight deck at thirty knots. Fortunately, AE1 Gary Gardner (our flight deck troubleshooter) had the presence of mind to race into the blossomed parachute and collapse it three-quarters of the way down the flight deck.



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

Image courtesy
of Sharlyn Marsh
[www.rgsmithart.com]

“Sand Blower” captures a four-plane division of heavily-loaded A-4s in their element: low and fast, enroute to the target.



Puresome Unplugged

~ YP's Excellent Adventures ~

By CDR Jack D. Woodal, USNR (Ret)

Way Up North

All Puresome knew was that the Cao Nung bridge was way up North.

"Way up North" meant lots of feet dry time, stooging around at low altitude over North Viet Nam, and lots of opportunity for Ol' Gomer to fling SAMs and Flaks and MiGs at Happy Alpha Strikers trying to blow up their bridge. At this stage of the game, Puresome understood it involved a certain amount of peril to the sanctity of his beautocks.

Nouc Maum Supply Line

Located between Hanoi and commie China, the bridge was part of the Nouc Maum supply pipeline, vital to the North Vietnamese war effort. Word had come to the airwing from the highest levels for "Brave American Boys" to disassemble the bridge with extreme prejudice. Piles of computer printouts, staff studies, and frag orders distilled into a squadron flight schedule with Puresome's name on it.

The big picture was a maximum air wing effort laid on to place an obscene number of big bombs in close enough vicinity of the target to mathematically insure that the bridge and its approaches would be severely cratered, thus interrupting the flow of fish sauce to the enemy. The small picture was Puresome having an extreme attack of the chickenshits.

The reason was the new guy in the game called Mr. SAM. While the airwing was off in Hong Kong buying out the China Fleet Club and comporting itself with zest, all those SAM sites that MacNamara's minions had watched so carefully had gotten built and Surprise! Surprise! Started shooting down Yankee Air Pirates with abandon. The thing was, they were a new,

unknown, James Bond infallible space-age threat, and Puresome was blinded by science. He did not yet know if he could out jink some electronic genius robot telephone pole with his name on it. Looking at all the red, twenty-five mile SAM range circles that his Alpha Strike would pass through on the threats briefing chart in the Integrated Operational Intelligence Center, he knew he would probably get to see the Elephant and its long, yellow teeth.

The air wing briefing in the I.O.I.C. filled the space with a seeming cast of a thousand Big Hats, briefers of all sorts, grim-faced aircrew, and intelligence pogues. Complex, multi-colored diagrams on butcher paper were displayed on easels, and computer banks whirled and gleeped in the background. The Alpha Strike was being led by a division of Sunday Punchers A-6s, carrying five Mk-84 2,000 pound bombs; two divisions of A-4Es from the Sidewinders and Blue Hawks, carrying a 2,000 pounder on the

"The thing was, they were a new, unknown, James Bond infallible space-age threat, and Puresome was blinded by science. He did not yet know if he could out jink some electronic genius robot telephone pole with his name on it."

centerline station; two 300 gallon drop tanks, and two 500 pound bombs on the outboard stations. The Black Aces would provide four Fox Fours for flak suppression, and the Jolly Rogers would provide TARCAP MiG protection. Because the distance was so great, two A-3 Whales would in-flight refuel the A-4s as well as the Phantoms enroute to the target. Then there were the usual RESCAP and wet-wing A-4s, BARCAP Phantoms, Fudds, ECM A-3s, and the RA-5C to swoop



Jack "Youthly Puresome" Woodul

by and take commemorative eight-by-ten glossy pictures of the whole post-strike mess.

Mr. SA-2's Envelope

Puresome listened intently as the Intruder leader described the navigation to the target. After refueling and transiting the Gulf at 22,000 feet, a descent would be started for the strike group to go feet dry just north of Haiphong at an altitude of 3500 feet above ground level, which would be maintained until pop-up at the target. After Mr. SA-2 the SAM had recently started shooting down U.S. aircraft with some regularity, Alpha Strike tactics had changed from steaming in at altitude and sixty degree bomb runs to a 3500 foot above ground ingress, which would theoretically keep the aircraft above most of the rocks and small-arms ground fire directed at them from below, and situate the aircraft theoretically just below the SAM envelope.

Puresome was happy enough to be down in the weeds, which was the Scooter's natural habitat; what he didn't care for particularly was popping a heavily loaded A-4 up to around twelve thousand feet in SAM country for a low-speed roll-in over the top to get into a forty-five degree dive bomb run on the target. Phantom flak-suppressers could stroke the burners to zoom to altitude; Intruders had two engines and a big, fat wing to get them to roll-in; high and slow was A-4 grape city. And Youthly was definitely anti-grape.

On the other hand, there was a really nice bridge to blow up.

Flight Deck

As always, Puresome was glad when all the briefing and sitting around trussed up in flight gear was finally interrupted by the chatter of the teleprompter ordering the pilots for the 1100 launch to man their planes. Waddling out of Ready Room Four-Starboard and up the long escalator that took him from below the hangar deck in the constricted, fluorescent-lit innards of the ship to the flight deck, he was grateful to step out into the catwalk and the real world of sunlight, sky, wind, steam, and the particular excitement of flags snapping on their halyards, the movement of men and machines on the flight deck, and the slow heave of the dark sea around him.

The aircraft on the crowded flight deck came to life in their turns; aircraft and ordnance checks were completed, and squadron personnel scurried out of the way with their gear and aircraft tie-down chains. Puresome held his brakes and watched the yellow-shirted taxi director as the Foxtrot flag ran up its halyard and the great flight deck healed over as the captain turned the carrier into the wind, and the first aircraft whoshed off the waist and forward catapults. The yellow shirt finally started giving hand signals, and Puresome carefully followed his directions, joining the elephant parade to the forward catapults.

Launch: Ready!

After being successively passed through several other yellow shirts, Puresome was positioned just behind the jet blast deflector for the number two catapult, which was the starboard twin of two shuttle tracks that ran from just forward of the antennae-bristling, office-building superstructure of the "Island" on up to the bow of the ship. As the aircraft in front of him was being positioned on the catapult, a sailor in goggles and Mickey Mouse helmet came up to the port side of his cockpit and held up a chalk board with his airplane's expected gross weight written on it. As part of his preflight planning, Puresome had tallied up the weight of the basic airplane, fuel, tanks, bombs, 20mm ammunitions, and minus the weight of his perspiration and nervous last pees. This was important, because the gross weight was cranked into the steam catapults so they would fire the aircraft into the air with enough speed to make it fly. The chalkboard figure was some three

"Puresome was squarely against bugging things up, especially if it involved possible accusations of Wuss-dom. Figuring that it might be close, but he'd deal with it later, Puresome decided he would press on. But his gas gauge was never far from his mind."

hundred pounds too low, and Puresome made upward gestures with the palm of his left hand. The sailor erased the first figure and added an automatic increment of five hundred pounds and scribbled it on the chalkboard. Puresome gave him a thumbs-up in agreement, figgering the extra thump the few extra pounds would make to the catapult setting would not rip the attachment points off his aircraft, and, after all, as the Child Bride maintained, more was always better. Other flight deck handlers attached a long, metal tiller bar to the nose wheel of the A-4 to position the airplane for the last tricky few feet critical to proper catapult alignment.

The aircraft in front of him whooshed down the catapult track in a roar of noise and steam. As the great metal barrier of the jet blast deflector lowered in front of him, Puresome locked onto the signals of the flight director and carefully used his throttle to slowly move the aircraft forward, foot by careful foot, the yellow shirt talking to him with tiny hand signals, holding brakes evenly while a crew of sailors underneath the aircraft attached the bridle that connected the catapult shuttle to the wing root and a dogbone-shaped holdback fitting back by the arresting hook that was made to hold back the A4, straining at takeoff power, until the force of the catapult stroke broke the weak middle of the fitting, and allowed the aircraft to hurtle down the catapult track at the designed pressure.

Aim!

Very, very slowly, Puresome added power for his nosewheel to go up and over the catapult shuttle, careful not to come down the front side fast enough to jerk the holdback fitting and possibly weakening or breaking it, which would be poor form, since the whole procedure would have to be repeated, causing a delay in the launch and much yelling by the Captain of the Boat, who was watching the launch from his glass office high in the island.

The tow-bar was disconnected and a

squadron quality control final checker in a black and white jersey rapidly moved around the airplane in a last look at anything wrong with the airplane. Sidewinder 411 looked good, and the checker gave a thumbs-up to the catapult officer and hustled out of the way.

The catapult officer pointed his finger at Puresome with his left hand and made a two-finger twirling gesture above his head with his right hand, which was the signal for the pilot to run his throttle to full power. Puresome shoved the throttle forward with his left hand and checked his engine instruments. Satisfied, he made a final control check with the stick; then, he looked at the catapult officer, who was still pointing at him and twirling two fingers. Puresome saluted him, put his head back against the headrest. He locked his left elbow to keep the throttle pushed to full throttle with his left hand, and he dropped his right hand to his crotch, his fingers spread toward the stick. He braced himself, looking straight ahead while the aircraft roared and shook at full power, awaiting the pleasure of the catapult officer.

The catapult officer returned Youthly's salute, and still whirling his right hand above his head, pointed his left finger to clear in succession the aircraft area and the catapult track, before pointing to the sailor who would actually punch the catapult firing button and had both hands in the air as a signal that all was still well in that department, and then pointing finally, back to the aircraft itself.

Fire!

Satisfied, he knelt and swept his right hand forward and down, as a signal to fire the catapult. The sailor manning the catapult launch station dropped his hands and punched the firing button. Sidewinder 411 squatted under the huge pull of the catapult shuttle; the holdback fitting broke, and the A-4 roared down the catapult track in a cloud of steam.

continued...

Puresome continued...

“Unhhhhhhh!” Puresome grunted under the force of the stroke. His vision blurred, and he grabbed the control stick as it moved aft to his waiting hand, and he held the stick in this position. Suddenly, the force released him and Puresome found himself flying.

Options

Once again, the system had worked, and he had not heard the warning tone that his squadron had wired into the altitude bug on the radar altimeter and that Youthly routinely set at thirty feet for launch. If that tone came on while he was still more or less blind from the force of the catapult, he had the choice of cleaning off his external stores with the emergency T-handle and hoping that he would then fly; or holding the stick with his right hand and pulling the secondary ejection handle between his legs and shelling out of the airplane. A successful catapult launch always made Puresome remember the old saying, “Being catapulted off a carrier was the next best thing to actual sex, provided the launchee had not been circumcised...”

Puresome rolled into a starboard clearing turn as he retracted his landing gear; then, he rolled back to the Foxtrot Corpen, the ship’s launch heading, and let the aircraft accelerate. Approaching two hundred knots, he retracted the flaps and continued to accelerate out in front of the ship. Finally, at ten miles, he turned port and started his climb to the squadron rendezvous altitude.

Gas ‘n Go

The ship completed the launch; the aircraft assembled into squadrons, and the squadrons took their places in the strike formation. Following the A-6s, the Alpha Strike headed north up the Gulf of Tonkin. Almost immediately, the F-4s started refueling from the port A-3 *Whale* tanker, and the A-4s began tanking from the starboard *Whale*.

Since the *Intruders* didn’t need any gas and Youthly’s division was next in formation behind the A-6s, they were the first A-4s to tank. The four Snake aircraft lined up in left echelon on the *Whale*’s port side and abeam the refueling drogue. Youthly watched Skip Lead slide over behind the

“Puresome didn’t bust his ass pulling the heavily-loaded A-4 out of his dive, but there were airplanes everywhere racing around in different directions, trying to avoid SAMs, the ground, mid-air, and now, flak! Gomer was shooting and there were tracers and angry flak bursts everywhere.”

drogue, sneak up and stab his refueling probe into the basket and begin to take on fuel. When he had received his fuel, he backed out and moved over to a station on the starboard side of the *Whale*.

Puresome was next, so he slid over below and behind the basket. Looking up through the top of his windscreen, he stabilized his position momentarily, then added a little bit of power and started moving up and in toward the basket. As his refueling probe got close, the airflow around the nose of the A-4 moved the basket out to the right; but Youthly had expected the movement and guided the probe into the middle of the basket, where it coupled with the refueling fitting. Slowly, he pushed about three ring-marks on the hose back into the belly of the *Whale* and awaited the amber standby light at the base of the hose to go out, and the green light, indicating transfer, to go on.

Or not...

But it didn’t happen. Flying close formation underneath the *Whale*’s aluminum overcast belly, Puresome pushed the hose in further, then backed out some and pushed again. No fuel. He cycled his aircraft switches and again, no fuel. Finally, with the rest of the world waiting behind him, he backed out and joined Skip lead on

the *Whale*’s starboard side. The next aircraft slid into position, and took fuel! Puresome acknowledged that the problem was with his aircraft and decided to hell with it. Since the air wing was Ziplip, he couldn’t yack about it on the radio; while he could probably use hand signals to indicate his problem more or less to Skip lead, it would bugger things up. Puresome was squarely against bugging things up, especially if it involved possible accusations of Wussdom. Figuring that it might be close, but he’d deal with it later, Puresome decided he would press on. But his gas gage was never far from his mind.

Feet Dry

With tanking finished, the two *Whales* and the TARCAP fighters departed, and the A-6s led a great arrowhead of aircraft north above the junk fleet fishing in the Gulf of Tonkin. A RESCAP helicopter pilot on the North SAR destroyer watched the strike pass the sky overhead and wondered what the afternoon would bring.

The karst islands north of Haiphong loomed up in the distance, and the *Intruder* leader started a slow descent from altitude, heading toward the land. Puresome turned on his gunsight and set up his ordnance switches.



SA-2 launch: telephone pole-sized missiles

The formation divisions loosened up, and the two flak suppressor *Phantoms* on either side checked ahead with their radars. As the strike went feet dry over lava-like limestone karst hills at thirty-five hundred feet, funny gawks and gleeps from enemy radars painting them were sounding in Puresome’s headset, joining the usual gabble from various Guard channel warnings. Youthly had hacked his stop clock crossing the coast for timing to the target, but he had decided to let the *Intruders* do the close navigation and mostly concentrated on moving his airplane around, watching everywhere for threats, and not running into anyone. The country turned flat and brown and green for anyone who had time to care.

Bogeys! ...not

Youthly’s first reaction to the two specks fast approaching the strike group from three o’clock slightly high was “Holy Shit! Here come the MiGs!” He just managed to stuff his heart back down in his chest to make the bogey call when he recognized the familiar, shark shape of the airplanes; and two *Oriskany* F-8s sliced by above, trolling for MiGs and checking them out. Puresome always felt like a fat sheep in formation, and he envied the fighters their freedom.

Dirty Orange Clouds

“Strike group from Puncher One, push ‘em up!” the *Intruder* lead called for the group to accelerate to 450 knots for the run-in to the target. Puresome clobbered his throttle and maneuvered to maintain his formation position as Skip lead moved the division of A-4s in loose trail of the *Intruders*; and the Blue Hawk division eased in trail of the Snakes.

Puresome was bouncing along at 450 knots with the ground whipping by and the initial point for the bomb run approaching, when a great, dirty orange cloud appeared between his division of A-4s and the leading A-6s. “Damn!” he thought perplexedly, “that must be at least a 150 millimeter flak gun to make an explosion that big!”

He was still thinking about that when he saw four contrails streaking toward aircraft high at twelve o’clock. Someone called “Guntrain TARCAP! SAMs! SAMs! BREAK! BREAK!” And immediately, more dirty, orange clouds appeared in the middle of the strike group, and its cohesion fell apart completely as airplanes frantically dove to the deck. As Puresome rolled inverted and dived, a streak the size of a

“Although he now realized that you didn’t necessarily automatically die when SAMs came after you, he figured that was enough for one day and he’d take his chances and stay below the SAM envelope, thank you.”

telephone pole whizzed through his peripheral vision.

Puresome didn’t bust his ass pulling the heavily-loaded A-4 out of his dive, but there were airplanes everywhere racing around in different directions, trying to avoid SAMs, the ground, mid-air, and now, flak! Gomer was shooting and there were tracers and angry flak bursts everywhere.

Pipper & Pickle

Things began to sort themselves out. Puresome realized that the dam and little lake he and other aircraft were racing around was the Initial Point to bomb the bridge. He knew where he was and where the target was, and strike aircraft were at least beginning to circulate in the same direction. Puresome had the throttle safety-wired in the 100 per cent position, and he built up as much speed as he could. When Puresome saw a couple of A-6s start to zoom climb, popping up to make their attack, he pulled the nose up and zoomed to follow them back up into the SAM envelope.

Sure enough, the bridge was where it was supposed to be; and as Puresome slowly rolled inverted at the top of his climb and began his dive, in the instant before the preceding A-6s bombs struck, he had a crystal clear, frozen-in-time picture of a man on a bicycle in the middle of the bridge. But then he was diving and had just put his pipper on the bridge when it disappeared in the explosion of at least five 2000 pound bombs. Puresome pressed on and pickled, bombing the smoke.

Water Buffalo Level

But the 2000 pounder on his centerline station had not thunked off with the other two bombs, and Puresome mashed through his customary seven-G pull-out. YAAAAA! Leaving the throttle clobbered, he headed for the Gulf as fast and as low as he could go.

The rest of the strike group was bombing and streaking for the Gulf, too, individually and in little groups. Puresome was alone, going at the speed of stink at water buffalo level—he would take his chances with rocks and arrows. Although he now

realized that you didn’t necessarily automatically die when SAMs came after you, he figured that was enough for one day and he’d take his chances and stay below the SAM envelope, thank you.

But all that stooging around at low altitude and full throttle had put a dent in his already meager gas supply, and Puresome still had a long way to go. And there was that pesky 2000 bomb on his centerline, which certainly didn’t help his drag count any. So he decided to donate it to a good cause, at least scaring the crap out of a gomer or two. Puresome popped up to five hundred feet, spied a ville up ahead that had a couple of trucks in it. He stuck his nose down in a ten degree napalm run and jettisoned the bomb with his emergency T-handle in what he hoped was their immediate vicinity.

Gas Fumes

A Blue Hawk had punched out somewhere behind him, but Puresome was in no condition to help. The downed pilot’s beeper wailed dejectedly in his headset. And above him, SAM was still searching.

Approaching the coast, Puresome joined another Blue Hawk A-4, and they egressed in combat spread formation, heads swiveling, not being real sure of how close to Haiphong their mad dash had taken them. They were well out over the water before they felt safe enough to climb and check each other out for unwanted holes in their aircraft.

And Puresome climbed as high as he could and poked along at maximum range airspeed until he could make an idle descent to a straight-in approach and trap to Guntrain. His A4 was too light to fly, but he fluttered along and trapped anyway. He shut the aircraft down up on the port side forward, indicating a fume in his gas tank.

Later, over medicinal brandy in his stateroom, Puresome pondered the lessons of the day: SAMs didn’t necessarily kill you. And it’s all right to be scared shitless, if you can regroup. And if you are scared shitless long enough, your voice isn’t even falsetto when you call the ball with gas fumes.

The A-4Ever Index
Summer 2004 to Fall 2015

This index is sorted by Issue beginning with Summer 2004. Additional indices sorted by Author and Category (such as Skyhawk History or Skyhawk Operations), can be found on the Skyhawk website at www.skyhawk.org. We hope that this index will be useful to our members by providing a means to quickly locate articles and other items of interest.

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Trout	Mike	A Launch from the Bonnie Dick	Fall 2004	10.4 17	Skyhawk Operations
Turpen	Joe	50 Years of Skyhawk Models Part I	Fall 2004	10.4 10	Modeling
Weber	David	First in Line	Fall 2004	10.4 14	Skyhawk Operations
Weber	David	Restoration of A-4F 154200 at Millville Army Airfield	Fall 2004	10.4 15	Restoration
Woodul	Jack	Readyroom-O-Rama: Numero 106	Fall 2004	10.4 13	Puresome
Adkinson	Larry	Who Were Those Guys? The Playboys in Vietnam	Winter 2005	11.1 4	Skyhawk History
Arthur	Stan	1972: The TA-4F Saw Combat with VA-164 on USS Hancock	Winter 2005	11.1 7	Skyhawk History
ATSI		A-4 Over Arizona	Winter 2005	11.1 1	Cover
Bittick	Johnny	Operations of VA-164 in 1972	Winter 2005	11.1 7	Skyhawk History
Bone	Margaret	The Crown's Off	Winter 2005	11.1 11	Journal
Dollarhide	Dave	USS Forrestal Fire and VA-46 A-4E Dedication at Evergreen	Winter 2005	11.1 15	Book Review
Foundation	Collings	Update on Restoration of TA-4 153524	Winter 2005	11.1 10	Restoration
Gann	Harry	Blue Angels over USS Arizona	Winter 2005	11.1 9	Gann's Gallery
Hickerson	Bob	Or Sometimes the Gods Smile On You	Winter 2005	11.1 18	Skyhawk History
Jobin	Ed	A Nugget and That Brand New Jet	Winter 2005	11.1 16	Skyhawk History
Powell	Boom	RA-5C Vigilante Units in Combat (Powell)	Winter 2005	11.1 14	Book Review
Powell	Boom	Chute Shots	Winter 2005	11.1 21	TINS
Trout	Mike	Flying Final on Fujiyama	Winter 2005	11.1 20	Skyhawk History
Turpen	Joe	50 Years of Skyhawk Models Part II	Winter 2005	11.1 19	Modeling
Woodul	Jack	Bouncing the Spider	Winter 2005	11.1 12	Puresome
Woodul	Jack	Born Fighting: How the Scots-Irish Shaped America (Webb)	Winter 2005	11.1 14	Book Review
Caiella	Jim	Skyhawk "508" and Lt. Al Carpenter	Spring 2005	11.2 12	Skyhawk History
Gann	Harry	Bicentennial Skyhawks of VT-24	Spring 2005	11.2 5	Gann's Gallery
Powell	Boom	Boy in a Skyhawk	Spring 2005	11.2 6	Skyhawk History
Powell	Boom	TA-4 Fallon Follies	Spring 2005	11.2 20	TINS
Smith	R.G.	Sandblower	Spring 2005	11.2 1	Cover
Taylor	Jeremy	Shadows of War (Robert Gandt)	Spring 2005	11.2 18	Book Review
Turpen	Joe	Hasegawa 1/32nd Model of A-47 155018 "Lady Jesse" (Turpen)	Spring 2005	11.2 11	Modeling
Weber	David	Twidget Goes Cyber - Skyhawk Association Ready Room	Spring 2005	11.2 19	Website
Wood	Drury	Flight Testing the Scooter	Spring 2005	11.2 14	Skyhawk History
Woodul	Jack	Seagull-O-Rama	Spring 2005	11.2 16	Puresome
Coleman	Adam	Skhawks in the Falklands: the Crash Site of A-4B (C-215)	Summer 2005	11.3 6	Skyhawk History
Editors	Staff	The Dumbest Contest	Summer 2005	11.3 19	Skyhawk History
Gabbard	John	No Warm Breakfast for Me, Or How a Landing Gear Can Make You Cry	Summer 2005	11.3 15	Maintenance/Ordnance
Gann	Harry	Blue Angels in Winter Training - El Centro 1975	Summer 2005	11.3 1	Cover
Gann	Harry	MCCRTG-10 Group Gaggle 1977	Summer 2005	11.3 10	Gann's Gallery
Mares	Ernie	What the Heck Were Bullwinder and Bombwinder? (Verver)	Summer 2005	11.3 13	Maintenance/Ordnance

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Powell	Boom	Nose Gear Squash	Summer 2005	11.3 18	TINS
Smith	R.G.	Sandblower II	Summer 2005	11.3 10	R.G.'s Art
Turpen	Joe	IPMS 2005 Best Skyhawk by Joe Driver	Summer 2005	11.3 7	Modeling
Verver	Gary	The Mystery of the Mystery FOD: Intake Mistake	Summer 2005	11.3 12	Maintenance/Ordnance
Verver	Gary	Searching for Skyhawk Info on the Web	Summer 2005	11.3 16	Website
Williams	Mark	A Case of the CLAB: Chu Lai Air Base	Summer 2005	11.3 8	Skyhawk History
Woodul	Jack	The Great Firepower FRABUP	Summer 2005	11.3 14	Puresome
Anonymous		A Whoosh Award	Fall 2005	11.4 22	Skyhawk History
Foster	Wynn	The Saints of VA-163 Part I	Fall 2005	11.4 10	Skyhawk History
Galanti	Paul	In Memoriam: VADM James Stockdale	Fall 2005	11.4 21	Memorial
Gann	Harry	El Toro Based H&MS-13 TA-4s off Los Angeles in 1975	Fall 2005	11.4 1	Cover
Gann	Harry	VMA-331 Snake Eyes	Fall 2005	11.4 4	Gann's Gallery
Homer	Joe "Toad"	First Skyhawk Atlantic Crossing by Buddy Store	Fall 2005	11.4 16	Skyhawk History
Langworthy	Ted	We Say Goodbye To Ernie Laib	Fall 2005	11.4 21	Memorial
Powell	Boom	Flight Plan	Fall 2005	11.4 15	TINS
Smith	R.G.	A4Ds Over the Golden Gate Bridge circa 1957	Fall 2005	11.4 4	R.G.'s Art
Turpen	Joe	Skyhawk Modeler's Family Tree	Fall 2005	11.4 9	Modeling
Weber	David	The Skyhawk Association Website Ready Room	Fall 2005	11.4 18	Website
Woodul	Jack	Douglas A-4 Skyhawk: Attack and Close-Support Bomber (Winchester)	Fall 2005	11.4 5	Book Review
Woodul	Jack	Readyroom-O-Rama: the Drop Tanks of Doom	Fall 2005	11.4 14	Puresome
Adkinson	Larry	Who Were Those Guys? Setting the Record Straight	Winter 2006	12.1 16	Skyhawk History
Coletto	Nick	Dumbest: It's Not Just for Pilots!	Winter 2006	12.1 23	TINS
Foster	Wynn	The Saints of VA-163 Part II	Winter 2006	12.1 8	Skyhawk History
Gann	Harry	TA-4F 3-Point Landing on USS Lexington	Winter 2006	12.1 6	Gann's Gallery
Lamers	John	The Bent Probe	Winter 2006	12.1 12	Skyhawk History
Powell	Boom	Gremlins 1977	Winter 2006	12.1 14	TINS
Powell	Boom	The World's Worst Aircraft (Winchester)	Winter 2006	12.1 7	Book Review
Sanders	Kit	A-4 Nightmare: the Dangerous Flight Deck	Winter 2006	12.1 17	Skyhawk History
Smith	R.G.	A4D-1 Delivers Nuclear Weapon	Winter 2006	12.1 1	Cover
Staff	Editors	Virginia Aviation Museum Restoration of A-4C 148543	Winter 2006	12.1 19	Restoration
Walthers	Jim	Training for the A-4 Nuclear Weapons Delivery	Winter 2006	12.1 4	Skyhawk Operations
Weber	Dave	Open Source Software	Winter 2006	12.1 17	Website
Woodul	Jack	The Great Goatsby, Part I	Winter 2006	12.1 20	Puresome
Woodul	Jack	Oral Tradition #406	Winter 2006	12.1 13	Puresome
Gann	Harry	VMA-324 A-4M 158158 Firing 5" Zuni Rockets	Spring 2006	12.2 20	Gann's Gallery
Powell	Boom	VA-127 Adversary A-4F over Sierra Nevada	Spring 2006	12.2 1	Cover
Powell	Boom	Skyhawks and Submarines Part I	Spring 2006	12.2 6	Skyhawk History
Powell	Boom	Le Cielfaucou Francais	Spring 2006	12.2 13	TINS
Renella	Marco	Naval Weapons Center China Lake	Spring 2006	12.2 10	Skyhawk History
Smith	R.G.	Kuwaiti A-4 Low Level over the Desert circa 1991	Spring 2006	12.2 20	R.G.'s Art
Williams	Mark	Skyhawk Restoration Review with Joe Turpen	Spring 2006	12.2 22	Restoration
Woodul	Jack	The Great Goatsby, Part Deux	Spring 2006	12.2 14	Puresome
Aloni	Shlomo	Eight Stored AHIT N Aircraft	Summer 2006	12.3 1	Cover
Aloni	Shlomo	The A-4 AHIT Today and the Rada AHIT-M	Summer 2006	12.3 12	Skyhawk History
Coletto	Nick	TINS for Ordies	Summer 2006	12.3 21	TINS
Gann	Harry	Gann's Gallery (A-4M and F-4U Topeka 1979)	Summer 2006	12.3 11	Gann's Gallery
Hickerson	Bob	Clash of the Carriers: the Story of the Marianas Turkey Shoot (Tillman)	Summer 2006	12.3 22	Book Review
Powell	Boom	Skyhawks and Submarines Part Deux	Summer 2006	12.3 6	Skyhawk History
Romm	Giora	The Yom Kippur War and My First Skyhawk Flight	Summer 2006	12.3 16	Skyhawk History
Smith	R.G.	A-4Hs over Israel	Summer 2006	12.3 11	R.G.'s Art
Turpen	Joe	Models by Nick Monopoli	Summer 2006	12.3 21	Modeling
Woodul	Jack	Crubfoot Active	Summer 2006	12.3 19	Puresome
Ellis	Gerry	The Last (and first) A-4 Out of Khe Sahn	Fall 2006	12.4 14	Skyhawk History
Shipman	Dick	The Air Barons: the Other Navy Flight Demonstration Team	Fall 2006	12.4 11	Skyhawk History
Smith	R.G.	A-4Ms under the SA-2s	Fall 2006	12.4 4	R.G.'s Art
Turpen	Joe	IPMS Best Skyhawk by Steve Ellis	Fall 2006	12.4 23	Modeling
Turpen & Williams	Joe & Mark	The Antatomy of a Restoration	Fall 2006	12.4 16	Restoration
Vincent	Hal	Testing the X and YA-4D	Fall 2006	12.4 8	Skyhawk History
Williams	Mark	VMA-324 A-4E over Mount Rainier	Fall 2006	12.4 1	Cover
Woodul	Jack	Flarelight	Fall 2006	12.4 18	Puresome
Bertrand	Birdie	The Tomcats of VMA-311 1964 - 1966 Part I	Winter 2007	13.1 8	Skyhawk History
Chesterman	Al	More Nickel Grass - A-4s to Israel	Winter 2007	13.1 18	Skyhawk History
Fitch	William	The Development of the Multiple Carriage Bomb Racj	Winter 2007	13.1 13	Maintenance/Ordnance
Kitrell	Charlie	Skyhawk Display Dedicated at Bartlesville, OK	Winter 2007	13.1 19	Restoration
Powell	Boom	Zanek: A Chronicle of the Israeli Air Force (Stevenson)	Winter 2007	13.1 22	Book Review

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RNZAF	Photo	A-4K over Mt. Ruapehu, New Zealand	Winter 2007	13.1 1	Cover
Shipman	Richard	A-4s to Israel	Winter 2007	13.1 16	Skyhawk History
Woodul	Jack	Blood Brothers	Winter 2007	13.1 20	Puresome
Bertrand	Birdie	The Tomcats of VMA-311 1964 - 1966 Part II	Summer 2007	13.2 10	Skyhawk History
Cathcart	Don	Mofak TINS	Summer 2007	13.2 22	TINS
Mayberry	John	Betting on a Record: Tom Mayberry and the A4D World Record	Summer 2007	13.2 20	Attic Attack
Turpen	Joe	Great New Models from Randy Fuller and Carlos Garcia	Summer 2007	13.2 8	Modeling
West	Denny	The A-4 Glider	Summer 2007	13.2 18	Skyhawk History
Williams	Mark	Roger Ball (Auten)	Summer 2007	13.2 9	Book Review
Winchester	Jim	Speed Record	Summer 2007	13.2 21	Attic Attack
Woodul	Jack	Way Up North	Summer 2007	13.2 14	Puresome
Dann	Rich	A-4E 149969 Project Rainhat	Fall 2007	13.3 1	Cover
Davisson	Budd	Flying with the Blue Angels in '75	Fall 2007	13.3 20	Skyhawk History
Larson	Mike	Bad Luck & Trouble: the TRANSLANT From Hell	Fall 2007	13.3 13	Skyhawk History
Mersky	Peter	The Ghostriders' Smiling Giant	Fall 2007	13.3 17	Skyhawk History
Powell	Boom	U.S. Navy and Marine Corps A-4 Units of the VN War (Mersky/	Fall 2007	13.3 16	Book Review
Sapp	Denny	Jim "Taco" Potter Remembered	Fall 2007	13.3 23	Skyhawk History
Tambini	Tony	Project Rainhat	Fall 2007	13.3 8	Skyhawk History
Turpen	Joe	Great New Models from Andrew Abshier	Fall 2007	13.3 6	Modeling
Weber	Dave	TINS X 2	Fall 2007	13.3 19	TINS
Weber	Dave	Twidget Goes Cyber	Fall 2007	13.3 12	Website
Woodul	Jack	Hosing Santini	Fall 2007	13.3 18	Puresome
Bartels	John	RAN A-4G During Operation Sand Grouper 82	Spring 2008	14.1 1	Cover
Miecznikowski	Bob	Playboy 11 is Down	Spring 2008	14.1 10	Combat
Patrick	Pat	Flame-out Stories, Part I	Spring 2008	14.1 17	Skyhawk History
Stanton	Duke	TINS X 2	Spring 2008	14.1 20	Skyhawk History
Tambini	Tony	Armed Forces Day: China Lake 1963	Spring 2008	14.1 16	Skyhawk History
Woodul	Jack	Adios, Whiz	Spring 2008	14.1 5	Memorial
Woodul	Jack	Bagging	Spring 2008	14.1 14	Puresome
Cupido	Joe	VMA-133 Dragons over Golden Gate Bridge	Summer 2008	14.2 1	Cover
Dollarhide	Dave	An Old Friend	Summer 2008	14.2 13	Restoration
Mersky	Peter	Rampant Raider: An A-4 Pilot in Vietnam (Gray)	Summer 2008	14.2 20	Book Review
Patrick	Pat	Flame-out Stories, Part II	Summer 2008	14.2 8	Skyhawk History
Powell	Boom	TINS X 2	Summer 2008	14.2 21	TINS
Rahn	Bob	Heinemann's Hot Rod Pt. I (from Tempting Fate by Bob Rahn)	Summer 2008	14.2 18	Skyhawk History
Tambini	Tony	A Simple Fix	Summer 2008	14.2 12	Maintenance/Ordnance
Turpen	Joe	Classic Airframes 1/48 TA-4J Skyhawk (Sneak Preview)	Summer 2008	14.2 15	Modeling
Woodul	Jack	High Country	Summer 2008	14.2 16	Puresome
Fuentes	Gidget	Honoring Admiral Stockdale	Fall 2008	14.3 20	Skyhawk History
Rahn	Bob	Heinemann's Hot Rod Pt. II (from Tempting Fate by Bob Rahn)	Fall 2008	14.3 14	Skyhawk History
Sapp	Denny	An Engine Fire in BUNO 154984	Fall 2008	14.3 13	Skyhawk History
Turpen	Joe	IPMS 2008 Best Skyhawk by Jim Clark	Fall 2008	14.3 22	Modeling
Veronico	Nicholas	Man on a Missile: Blue Angels Fly the A-4	Fall 2008	14.3 9	Skyhawk History
Verver	Gary	Blue Angel Split from Delta	Fall 2008	14.3 1	Cover
Woodul	Jack	Scooter Days at Yum'er	Fall 2008	14.3 18	Puresome
ATSI	Staff	Israeli A-4N Takeoff at Sunset	Spring 2009	15.1 1	Cover
Graham	Bill	Stolen Skyhawk! A LCPL Launches in 1986	Spring 2009	15.1 10	Skyhawk History
Olsen	Ken	The Oley Chronicles: Mishaps at Cecil Field	Spring 2009	15.1 14	Skyhawk History
Turpen	Joe	CARF Models' Large-scale Skyhawk	Spring 2009	15.1 22	Modeling
Vincent	Hal	More on Flight Testing: Early A4D Prototypes	Spring 2009	15.1 17	Skyhawk History
Wood	Drury	More on Flight Testing: Early A4D Prototypes	Spring 2009	15.1 17	Skyhawk History
Woodul	Jack	The Night Thing	Spring 2009	15.1 20	Puresome
Woodul	Jack	Kerosene Cowboys: Manning the Spare (Arrington)	Spring 2009	15.1 9	Book Review
ATSI	Staff	ATSI TA-4 Training Mission	Summer 2009	15.2 1	Cover
Gagne	Jon	Kingsville MWR Unveils the "King Kat"	Summer 2009	15.2 17	Skyhawk History
Gann	Harry	Besides, it's Fun to Fly, Part I of the series	Summer 2009	15.2 12	Skyhawk History
Mersky	Peter	The Rescue of Streetcar 304 (Fields)	Summer 2009	15.2 8	Book Review
Stratton	Dick	A Bad Day: Shot Down over North Vietnam	Summer 2009	15.2 18	Combat
Tullo	Frank	8 Thuds and a Scooter	Summer 2009	15.2 10	Combat
Turpen	Joe	TA-4J by Carlos Garcia	Summer 2009	15.2 23	Modeling
Woodul	Jack	The Tip of the Spear	Summer 2009	15.2 20	Puresome
Dollarhide	Dave	An Old Friend, continued	Fall 2009	15.3 11	Restoration
Gann	Harry	Besides, it's Fun to Fly, Part II of the series	Fall 2009	15.3 12	Skyhawk History
Marsh	Curt	Restoration: VMA-131's 158182	Fall 2009	15.3 23	Restoration
Mersky	Peter	Loud and Clear: the Memoir of an Israeli Fighter Pilot (Spector)	Fall 2009	15.3 19	Book Review

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Rauch	Dutch	A-4A 139968 Display at USNA, Annapolis, MD	Fall 2009	15.3 1	Cover
Staff	Editors	Fund-raising Appeal - A-4A 139968 Annapolis	Fall 2009	15.3 2	Restoration
Turpen	Joe	IPMS 2009 Best Skyhawk by Wayne Bowman	Fall 2009	15.3 10	Modeling
Woodul	Jack	Jet Dive Bombing, circa 1960	Fall 2009	15.3 18	Skyhawk Operations
Woodul	Jack	Sojers	Fall 2009	15.3 20	Puresome
Arnold	Bob	A Trip to the Suburbs	Spring 2010	16.1 9	Combat
Carrara	Dino	ATSI: A-4 Skyhawks for Hire	Spring 2010	16.1 12	Skyhawk Operations
Mersky	Peter	Israeli A-4 Skyhawk Units in Combat (Aloni)	Spring 2010	16.1 20	Book Review
Shipman	Richard	Towing the TDU: The Mission No One Wanted	Spring 2010	16.1 16	Skyhawk Operations
Shlomo	Aloni	Excerpt IDF/AF A-4 Skyhawk Shootdown	Spring 2010	16.1 21	Skyhawk Operations
Snedeker	Sid	A-4B 142112 in Flight From Oshkosh to Waukegan, IL	Spring 2010	16.1 1	Cover
Staff	Editors	Skhawk Study Group: Restoration of WHF A-4B	Spring 2010	16.1 15	Restoration
Turpen	Joe	IPMS 2010 Preview	Spring 2010	16.1 22	Modeling
Woodul	Jack	Doggus Delicti	Spring 2010	16.1 18	Puresome
Filmer	Paul	McDougall Douglas TA-4J First Flight	Summer 2010	16.2 14	Restoration
Filmer	Paul	TA-4 N518TA in Flight Marana, AZ	Summer 2010	16.2 1	Cover
Rauch	Dutch	Aircraft Carriers at War (Holloway)	Summer 2010	16.2 22	Book Review
St. Pierre	Rick	Resurrecting an Angel	Summer 2010	16.2 9	Restoration
Staff	Editors	Skyhawks Are Still Going to Sea	Summer 2010	16.2 20	Allied Operations
Turpen	Joe	VF-126 TA-4J by Ricardo Ramos	Summer 2010	16.2 23	Modeling
Woodul	Jack	A Night on the Town	Summer 2010	16.2 18	Puresome
Young	Lucy	Scooter Soars over Middlebury, Vermont	Summer 2010	16.2 13	Restoration
Crist	Ken	A-4s Over Oskhosh at Airventure 2010	Fall 2010	16.3 1	Cover
Gann	Harry	The First TA-4	Fall 2010	16.3 6	Skyhawk History
Holloway	James L.	Tribute to the Tinker Toy Part I	Fall 2010	16.3 10	Skyhawk History
Kiely	Diej	U.S.Marine Corps Aviation Since 1912 (4th Edition) by Peter Mersky	Fall 2010	16.3 22	Book Review
Turpen	Joe	TA-4J Adversary Model in VC-8 Markings	Fall 2010	16.3 23	Modeling
Williams	Mark	Skyhawks Over Oshkosh	Fall 2010	16.3 16	Skyhawk Restoration
Woodul	Jack	Rockets in the Rain	Fall 2010	16.3 20	Puresome
Cameron	Jim	VA-23 Black Knights Host Reunion	Spring 2011	17.1 18	Reunions
Carlson	Ted	Blacksheep Old and New	Spring 2011	17.1 1	Cover
Frommelt	Todd	Skyhawks Still Slipping the Surly Bonds	Spring 2011	17.1 16	Skyhawk Operations
Frommelt	Todd	Centennial Kick Off at NAS North Island	Spring 2011	17.1 20	Skyhawk History
Frommelt	Todd	Israeli Pilot's Last Flight	Spring 2011	17.1 21	Skyhawk News
Holloway	James L.	Tribute to the Tinker Toy Part II	Spring 2011	17.1 8	Skyhawk History
Stanton	D.R. "Duke"	Ah, Memories of the High Jinks	Spring 2011	17.1 15	Skyhawk History
Turpen	Joe	Fujimi 72nd Scale A-4B Maverick Kit	Spring 2011	17.1 21	Modeling
Verhegghen	Robert	A Skyhawk for Belgium	Spring 2011	17.1 12	Skyhawk History
Woodul	Jack	A Near Thing	Spring 2011	17.1 22	Puresome
Dollarhide	Dave	The Dollarhide Log: Restoration of A-4C 149606	Summer 2011	17.2 15	Skyhawk Restoration
Hickerson	Bob	Bury Us Upside Down: The Misty Pilots	Summer 2011	17.2 18	Book Review
Hock	R.G.	Operation Rip Tide 1963	Summer 2011	17.2 12	Skyhawk History
Munro	Pete	Letters from Yankee Station	Summer 2011	17.2 10	Combat
Roth	Jim	Special Pilot	Summer 2011	17.2 16	Skyhawk Operations
Sele	Tim	Build Them Rugged: Ed Heinemann's Vision	Summer 2011	17.2 9	Skyhawk History
Smith	R.G.	A-4 Spotting on the Waist Cat	Summer 2011	17.2 19	R.G.'s Art
Stedman	J.J.	TA-4K 157914 Passes Half Dome in Yosemite National Park	Summer 2011	17.2 1	Cover
Woodul	Jack	Reluctant Shellbacks	Summer 2011	17.2 22	Puresome
Dollarhide	Dave	Skyhawk Ventures A-4C 149606 Takes to the Air	Fall 2011	17.3 1	Cover
Dollarhide	Dave	Skyhawk Ventures A-4C 149606 Takes to the Air	Fall 2011	17.3 9	Skyhawk Restoration
Dollarhide	Dave	AAA Hit Pulling Off Target with Rick Millison	Fall 2011	17.3 11	Skyhawk History
Editors	Staff	Parachute Fails to Deploy - Twice (Lt. Ed Dickson	Fall 2011	17.3 6	Skyhawk History
McBride	J.J.	The Last Combat Cruise of the A-4 Charlies	Fall 2011	17.3 15	Skyhawk History
Powell	Boom	Le Cielfaucou Francais - 1963	Fall 2011	17.3 12	Skyhawk History
Powell	Boom	Triple Sticks by Bernard Fipp	Fall 2011	17.3 18	Book Review
Smith	R.G.	High Flight	Fall 2011	17.3 17	R.G.'s Art
Turpen	Joe	Trumpeter 1/32nd Adversary A-4E Kit	Fall 2011	17.3 19	Modeling
Williams	Mark	Close Only Country in Horse Shoes, Hand Grenades and Nucs	Fall 2011	17.3 14	Skyhawk History
Woodul	Jack	Viva Espana!	Fall 2011	17.3 21	Puresome
Barnes	Jim	Remembering Bob Rahn	Spring 2012	18.1 13	Skyhawk History
Blair	David	Over the Side	Spring 2012	18.1 15	Skyhawk History
Chinn	Earl	TINS	Spring 2012	18.1 18	TINS
Corbett	Bruce	Crashing the First TA-4	Spring 2012	18.1 12	Skyhawk History
Editors	Staff	Fact or Fiction? Inverted Plugs	Spring 2012	18.1 14	Skyhawk History
Frommelt	Todd	Skyhawks Still Slipping the Surly Bonds - Redux	Spring 2012	18.1 8	Skyhawk Operations

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Magee	Hugh	The Nam Dinh Strike	Spring	2012	18.1 16	Combat
Mersky	Peter	Scooter! The Douglas A-4 Skyhawk Story (Thomason)	Spring	2012	18.1 11	Book Review
Postlethwaite	Mark	1972 Iron Hand Mission (Painting)	Spring	2012	18.1 1	Cover
Sapp	Denny	Reflections - Viet Nam From Then to Now	Spring	2012	18.1 10	Skyhawk History
Smith	R.G.	A4D-1s Overhead	Spring	2012	18.1 17	R.G.'s Art
Turpen	Joe	Skyhawks in Styrene Part I	Spring	2012	18.1 20	Modeling
Woodul	Jack	Crubfoot Active	Spring	2012	18.1 23	Puresome
Atwell	Gene	A-4s for Malaysia Part I	Summer	2012	18.2 8	Skyhawk History
Duffer	Don	Flying the A-4 Skyhawk: A Great Retirement Job	Summer	2012	18.2 12	Skyhawk History
Frommelt	Todd	Sharing Some Skyhawk Heritage	Summer	2012	18.2 14	Skyhawk History
Hickerson	Bob	Skyhawks: The History of the RNZAF Skyhawk (Simms & Lee Frampton)	Summer	2012	18.2 21	Book Review
Magee	Hugh	No Surprise at Bai Thuong	Summer	2012	18.2 11	Combat
Simms	Don	RNZAF Skyhawks of Kiwi Red 1988	Summer	2012	18.2 1	Cover
Smith	R.G.	Royal Australian Navy A-4Gs over HMAS Melbourne	Summer	2012	18.2 17	R.G.'s Art
Stafford	Roy	Blues Photo Shoot (almost wipeout)	Summer	2012	18.2 16	TINS
Sweeny	Chuck	Do You Have a DFC?	Summer	2012	18.2 15	Skyhawk History
Turpen	Joe	Skyhawks in Styrene Part II	Summer	2012	18.2 18	Modeling
Woodul	Jack	Buffalo Bill	Summer	2012	18.2 22	Puresome
Cartwright	Allan	Dam Busters Photo Shoot	Fall	2012	18.3 34	Skyhawk History
Dollarhide	Dave	Skyhawks at Oshkosh 2012	Fall	2012	18.3 18	Skyhawk Operations
Editors	Staff	Skyhawk Aviators - Gordon "Gordo" Gray	Fall	2012	18.3 10	Skyhawk History
Frommelt	Todd	Flying Leatherneck Museum Unveils Restored A-4M	Fall	2012	18.3 32	Skyhawk History
Navy	U.S.	A-4M 160264	Fall	2012	18.3 1	Cover
Rivas	Santiago	Argentina's Fighting Hawks	Fall	2012	18.3 6	Skyhawk Operations
Ruffer	Jim	Aviator's Secret Mission: Gen Norega's "Prison of Death"	Fall	2012	18.3 30	Skyhawk History
Smith	R.G.	A-4 MiG Victory by T.R. Swartz	Fall	2012	18.3 5	R.G.'s Art
Woodul	Jack	Happy Trails to You	Fall	2012	18.3 38	Puresome
Atwell	Gene	A-4s for Malaysia Part II	Winter	2012-13	18.4 11	Skyhawk History
Dollarhide	Dave	Skyhawk's Rocket-Powered Ejection Seat	Winter	2012-13	18.4 14	Skyhawk History
Mersky	Peter	On Heroic Wings: Stories of the DFC (Lanman and Wendling)	Winter	2012-13	18.4 10	Book Review
Smith	R.G.	Marine Tradition	Winter	2012-13	18.4 1	Cover
Smth	R.G.	TA-4 at Point Mugu	Winter	2012-13	18.4 9	R.G.'s Art
Turpen	Joe	Skyhawks in Styrene Part III	Winter	2012-13	18.4 18	Modeling
Winchester	Jim	Broken Arrow!	Winter	2012-13	18.4 16	Skyhawk History
Woodul	Jack	After the Beginning (poem)	Winter	2012-13	18.4 8	Poem
Woodul	Jack	The Shrill of the Bagpipes, The Roll of the Drums	Winter	2012-13	18.4 22	Puresome
Elmore	Larry	A-4s Forever (really!)	Spring	2013	19.1 14	Skyhawk Operations
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