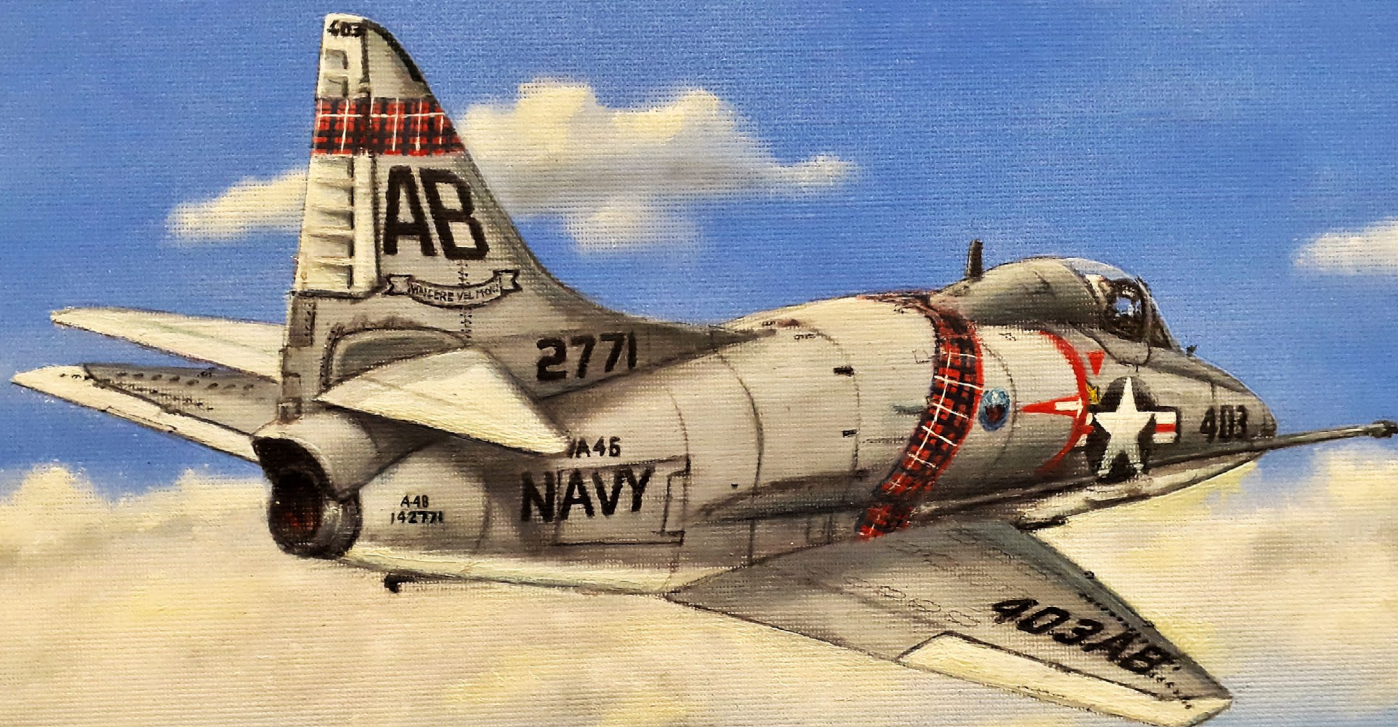


THE A-4 EVER

SKYHAWK ASSOCIATION JOURNAL VOL 27-4



J. MacNee '95

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Smart Hawk

Fuel Air Explosive (FAE) At China Lake

The First Marine A4 Squadron

U.S. Army Skyhawk?

*Skyhawk Association
Spring Board Meeting
TBA*

Winter 2021-2022

<http://skyhawk.org>



THE PREZ SEZ

By George "Woodpecker" Blosser

As I write the Prez Sez for the "winter edition" of the Journal, the title is consistent with the present cold weather in South Central Virginia. After a great trip to Reno and Hook21, we are already hoping that spring will arrive soon.

The Journal

Journal Editor Dave Dollarhide continues to deliver informative and entertaining articles in each edition of the Journal. His predecessor Bob Hickerson is making progress with his recovery, and was able to be home for Christmas. Our editors are always looking for articles for the Journal and would appreciate any help you can provide.

Future Officers

During Hook21 in Reno, the board realized that our plan for future officers would not materialize. Bill "Gunny" Ravgiala, the VP of Marine, will leave that post in September 2022. Skyhawk Director Gene "Blade" Atwell has agreed to be nominated for the Skyhawk Association Presidency. If elected, Gene will begin a two-year term effective September 2022.

Skyhawk Website

The Skyhawk website has a President Podium Column in the

Ready Room Section. The original design came from past-President Pete Cole, and during his presidency, Pete regularly added information to the site. I will do my best to continue this practice as soon as new information is received.

Webmaster Gene "Blade" Atwell and Dick Nielsen continue to make updates and routine maintenance adjustments to the site. Gene and Dick are always looking for additional volunteers to help with the routine website work. Training is available, and we encourage anyone interested in helping out to contact Gene at geneatwell@gmail.com.

Membership

Association Secretary Terry Cooney reports that the current Skyhawk membership is 730 paid subscriptions. We greatly rely on our current membership to recruit new members. Many of you have helped with this over the years, and we thank you for this effort. Please keep up the excellent work.

Still Flying

The number of A-4s still flying has been pretty steady over the past few years. Todd "Hun" Frommelt reports that the number still flying continues at 43. Several projects are currently underway to return additional A-4



George "Woodpecker" Blosser

aircraft to an airworthy condition. We will keep you up-to-date on these projects when complete.

Challenge Coins

Skyhawk Challenge Coins have been a popular item, and we are repeating this ad from the last Journal in the hopes that we will reach more members. The coins are available on the Skyhawk Website. In the "Association" section. Click on "Ship's Store" to locate the coins.



Odds and Ends

Limited back issues of the A-4Ever Journal are available for purchase. Contact Ted "Bear" Langworthy, 2043 Williams Lakeshore, Kingsland, TX 78639, or email Bear at flybear36@gmail.com. The charge is \$2 per issue minimum order of three, postage included. (Domestic only)

Let Us Know

If your contact information has changed, don't forget to forward that information to Secretary Terry Cooney, at skyhawkasn@gmail.com, to update our records.



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

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BOMBS AWAY!

• Winter 2021-2022 •

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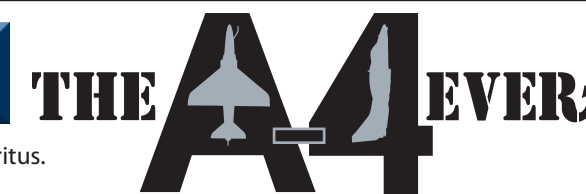
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Gene "Blade" Atwell – Webmaster.

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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@skyhawk.org. Stephanie Davis, graphics, skyhawk@nflight.com. Paper issues printed by Acculink, Greenville, NC.

On the Cover: James MacNee, from Glasgow, Scotland, has been a fan of the VA-46 Clansmen for many years. As an artist, he's painted a number of the squadron's airplanes. This A-4B, 142771, painted in 1995, is typical of his fine work. We appreciate Jim's permission to use it as our cover picture.



Has it really been 50 years? A-4Ls home from ACDUTRA, 1971.

TAKE NO PRISONERS

Letters to the Editor

sa-journal-editor@skyhawk.org

■ **From: Major Dr. Nor Ibrahim Bin Sulaiman RMAF (Retired)**
Subject: A-4 BUNO 151178

I plan to write an article on SAR operation involving the said *Skyhawk* which crashed off Grik, Peninsular Malaysia, on 15 November 1987. A Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) S61 *Sea King* helicopter managed to pick the pilot, a Major Burn, and flew him (to) Penang General Hospital. I would be grateful if (you) could furnish details of the incident. By the way, what's the name of the aircraft carrier?

From: Gary Verver
To: Major Dr. Nor Ibrahim Bin Sulaiman RMAF (Retired)

I'm Gary Verver and one of the Skyhawk researchers. Although I have searched our records and several online newspaper digital archives, I have nothing to share at this point. I have reached out to several people who were in VC-5 and hope one of them can put me in touch with someone who was in VC-5 in November of 1987. You ask if I know the name of the aircraft carrier. I didn't know he was operating from a carrier, so no I don't have any information about the carrier.



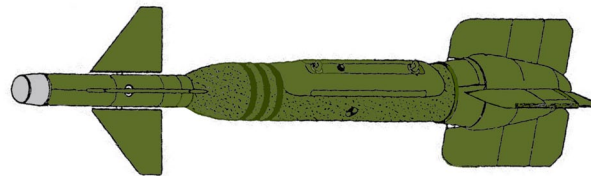
BUNO 152854

■ **From: Marco Renella, CAPT, USN (Ret), Laser Project Pilot, China Lake 1969-1972**
Subject: Development of Laser Designators at China Lake

I very much enjoyed the article by Johnny Bittick in the Summer 2021 Issue. He is one of the finest officers that I had the privilege of knowing during my career. His story about getting the laser designators to the fleet and figuring out

how to use them is spot on. I'd like to share an accurate and amusing story on how they got to the fleet.

The hottest project at China Lake, aside from Sidewinder Aim-9L, was the laser research and development. LBGs were developed over a very short time span and were an immediate success story. I dropped the first operational LGB in early 1970 from an A-4E and it scored a direct hit.



While further modifications dealt with going from simple delta wings to double-delta configurations, the basic weapon remains the same today. The real story was the laser designators. That first LGB's target was "lased" from a ground laser, fix mounted and probably powerful enough to burn a hole into the target. I'm exaggerating a bit but as I lifted off and turned towards the target area several miles away, the seeker head immediately locked on. There was no head-up display at this time ... just a deviation meter mounted on the windscreen, much like a very rudimentary ILS needle system and little light to indicate the seeker head was locked on. Later a tone was installed.

NAVAIR and the China Lake engineers knew immediately that if this system was ever to be operational for the fleet, an airborne laser had to be developed. This is where the story got interesting. A senior engineer at NWC was a PHD type (I called him Doctor Bob) and I believe he was a GS-17. This was his baby. And he truly was a genius. He wanted to fly in the back seat of the TA-4F and guide for himself the development of this breadboard project. ...and I mean breadboard. So, I gave him the required safety briefings, got him ejection seat qualified, chamber qualified, and scheduled a first indoctrination hop. He showed up ready the next Monday morning carrying a size 12 shoe box full of wires, laser, and other gadgets pouring out of the box. The flight engineers had rigged a 24 volt hook up for him over the weekend and he plugged it in. The darn thing worked but I warned him about ejecting with all that stuff strewn around the cockpit. He basically told me not to worry about it ... the admiral had given his blessing.

We didn't know how safe the lasers were that we were using in those early days, so we wore goggles, which were probably as safe as tinted windows. He did remark about cockpit scatter back or something like that but he would address that issue in a few days.

The amusing thing about this whole episode is that this PHD couldn't fly without getting very airsick. This was summer at China Lake and the ramp temperatures were somewhere in the 115F degree neighborhood. When we got back from that first hop, the plane captain brought up the ladder, I popped the canopy, and hopped back to help him out of the cockpit. There he was looking sheepish, white as a ghost, and handed me his gloves. Both were filled with barf and the smell was overwhelming. I ended up on the tarmac on my hands and knees barfing as well. I couldn't talk any of the other project pilots to share the flights with him. Each day he would come out to the aircraft with a different box of wires and each day the hop would end up about the same. The lasers worked and he got sick. Not being that stupid of a lieutenant, I learned to keep my oxygen mask on and in my seat until he had deplaned. It was tough getting plane captains.

■ **From: John Waas, USN (Ret), VC-10, 1976-1978**
Subject: VC-10 1976 Midair Collision

Good evening. I was looking at the Skyhawk Association VC-10 site and saw your request for more information about the loss of Buno 152854 in 1976.



I reported aboard VC-10 shortly after the incident, to fly the A-4. I was briefed on the incident by one of the pilots, LCDR Roger Reff, who was flying the aircraft that was lost and had to eject. The other pilot involved, LT Robert Vessely, had just transferred out. Roger and Vess were flying a two plane mission in support of a ship and had just gone feet wet heading south of GTMO. They were not in close formation and Roger lost sight of Vess, who was in the lead. As a result of the loss of sight, Roger gradually climbed and impacted the bottom of Vess' (aircraft-Ed). The impact caused Roger's aircraft to break apart and as he passed into view of Vess, Vess called for Roger to eject, which he did. Vess' aircraft was badly damaged, but flyable, and Vess was able to safely get his aircraft back to GTMO. This all took place in the late afternoon. Roger was picked up a short time later by the station helicopter. He suffered no serious injuries. As a footnote, "Vess" was involved in another midair in 1983, flying the A-7. He was killed when his A-7 and another A-7 collided at Roosevelt Roads.

From: Gary Verver

Thanks John, much appreciated and I'll update the VC-10 page shortly.

From: Dick Twilde
Subject: Return to Saigon book review

I just finished Larry Duthie's book and found it to be the best book on "Nam" that I have yet read. It brought back a whole lot of memories of operations, places and especially people. It was, as someone has said "a frenzy of remembrance"! It is most readable - he's a great writer! Thanks for recommending it.

■ **From: Steve Gray**
Subject: Letter from Roy "Howdy" Edwards

First, please allow me to express my on-going gratitude for your excellent work as editors and publishers of the A4Ever Skyhawk journal! It brings joy to my life!

In the current Summer issue, there is a letter to the editor from Roy Edwards describing his time as an instructor at VT-24 at NAS Chase Field, Beeville, Texas. I was a student there during this time and got my training in VT-25 and VT-26. He mentioned in the final paragraph of his letter the names of some other USMC pilots who were instructors with him. One name leaped out of the page at me, John Ditto, who was a Captain, USMC at the time. John Ditto set in motion events which culminated in me making my graduation flight landing on the parallel taxiway at Chase Field. While it may appear as a shameless promotion of my book, "*Rampant Raider, An A4 Skyhawk Pilot In Vietnam*," I thought Roy might enjoy reading about that time frame from my perspective as a student. The events concerning John Ditto occur on page 110. Could you please forward this letter to Roy or provide me his contact information.

From: Dave Dollarhide

Thanks for your nice comments, Steve. The letters section is one of the best things about the magazine for just the reason you mentioned - all about friends and memories. Like you, I went through VT-25 and

continued...

Send your letters to sa-journal-editor@skyhawk.org

Send your letters to sa-journal-editor@skyhawk.org

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR continued.

VT-26, getting my wings in the spring of '66...an incredibly exciting time in the Cougar and Tiger. Why did you land on the taxiway?

From: Steve Gray

Howdy, Dave, I didn't realize you and I had such parallel experiences in the training command! You must have been a few weeks ahead of me, I got winged on June, 26, 1966. To answer your question about why I had to land on the taxiway I could say "read my book," but the short version is: The Skipper of VT-26 requested to be the instructor on my graduation flight in the F-11. The final hop was no advantage head on attacks between instructor and student. Commander Pritchard was the instructor and we were directly overhead Chase field at around 30,000. Because of my history in the training command, I was anything but aggressive in the engagements, I just wanted to NOT screw up! So, CDR. Pritchard was winning all the engagements and having a grand time so we stayed a little past bingo fuel for Navy Corpus Christi but, heck, it was a clear day and we were right overhead the field. But when we switched to the tower frequency to enter the traffic pattern chaos ensued! An F-11 had to abort because of a nozzle open burner take off and when his tailhook engaged the cross-deck wire, it yanked the entire tail, engine and all from the airplane littering the runway with debris. The other long runway was closed for re-surfacing. The remaining short runway was too short for landings by F-9 and F-11 airplanes and had a temporary MO-Rest set up mid field. It took time to reset the arresting gear after each trap and as luck would have it a bunch of low state students were lined up for traps on the short runway. An F-9 instructor had waved off to let his low state student wingman trap ahead of him and he had flamed out at the 180 and had to eject!

This was the situation when CDR. Pritchard and I switched to tower frequency. Since we were well below

bingo for Corpus, Pritchard told me to just land behind him on the parallel taxiway. So, for my final graduation flight at NAS Chase Field, I landed on the taxiway.

From: Jim Marcely
To: George Blosser
Subject: Jim Marcely's letter in response to the publication of his Oriskany Fire article

Thank you for sending me a copy of *A-4 Forever!* Your integration of the photos really dressed it up. Deletion of the CPO's steaks part was very wise!

After submitting the article, it occurred to me that there was another effect of the Oriskany fire on Naval Aviation. The Navy designed a detachable bin for aviation flares that was attached to the side of the ship on the flight deck level. In case of fire, the bin and its dangerous flares could be quickly jettisoned. The bin was installed in active CVs at the next shipyard availability. The concept was designed into future CVs under construction.

I was also pleased to see a review of Don Purdy's book, *Where the High Winds Sing*. The cruise after the fire, I became the Air Wing 16 Intelligence officer. We still had the Ghost Riders (VA-164), along with the Saints (VA-163) as our two *Skyhawk* squadrons. Don was a Ghost Rider JG on his first cruise. That was the 1967 cruise memorialized by historian Peter Fey's book, *Bloody Sixteen*. Other personal memoirs of that historic cruise were penned by Ghost Rider Larry Duthie, *Return to Saigon*; Ghost Rider Frank Elkins, *The Heart of a Man*, edited posthumously by his wife Marilyn; Saint Ken "Mule" Adams, *Our Lives "on the Line;"* and, of course, the memoirs of Oriskany *Skyhawk* pilots who became POWs: Saints John McCain, *Faith of my Fathers*; Al Stafford, *Bouncing Back*; and Dave Carey, *The Ways We Choose*. Also of interest is Saint Frank "Hotai" Hughes' thinly fictionalized memoir of the '66 cruise, fire and all, *Everyday Heroes*.

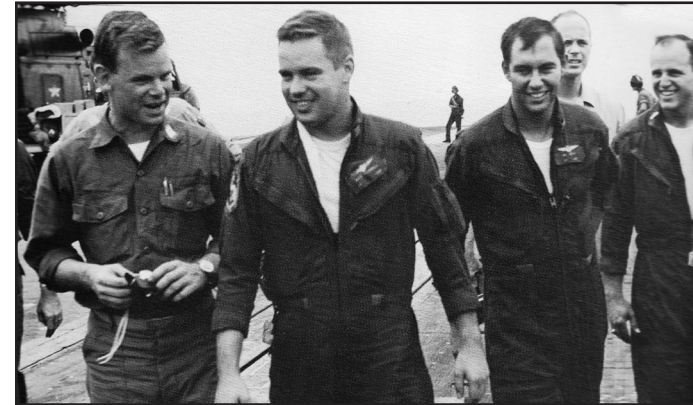
From: Bob "Boom" Powell



We all realize that the world of Naval Aviation is a small one and it's a rare issue of magazines like *A4Ever*, where a name from our past doesn't pop up. So it was for this kid in the Fall 2021 issue -- four times no less.

"*Four Lost Up North*" by Arnie Henderson: **Cliff Johns** was a member of the small Vigilante community. Many former A-1 *Skyraider* pilots wound up in the "Vigi," via various routes. (One was an instructor in T-2 Buckeyes and after he got orders to RVAH, asked to get a few traps in the T-2. Nope said higher-ups, so his first ever jet carrier landings were in a RA-5C.) Cliff became CO of RVAH-14 and maybe his Spad background inspired the bit of frivolity in the photo (*With his cloth helmet and goggles - Ed*).

Ibid. **Brev Moore** was with me in VA/VF-43 when that squadron was transitioning from instrument training to fighter adversary, still had a bunch of TA-4s, but started getting A-4 "Mongooses" (Mongeeese?) Fun to fly?... you "betcha sweet a**." We also later overlapped a few months on CVAN-69, "Ike."



Thornhill returns to Intrepid after shoot-down . L-R Bob Cole, Thorny, Bo Smith, Pete Schoeffel, Keith Strickland.

Page 5: **Dave Thornhill** was in that really odd airwing on Intrepid, CVS(A)-11: CAG roosted in Cecil, as did VA-34 (A-4 Charlies), and VA-15 (also Charlies, Thorny's squadron); while VSF-3 (an attack squadron in everything, but name, A-4 Bravos) was at NAS Alameda in foggy California, with -- the next to last--Skyraider squadron, VA-145. Electric Spads came from Quonset, Willy Fudds, Norfolk, Helo det from Lakehurst, and, to top it off, some fast movers, Photo *Crusaders* and Fighter F-8s out of Miramar. As an LSO (trainee) I probably waved Thorny a few times. The picture of his return is from the *Intrepid* 1967 cruise book. Thorny or Carrot-top can probably ID the other folks.

Ibid. Finally, and not for the first time (he's a famous guy) -- **Charlie Plumb**, my partner for the entire formation phase at VT-7. I remember us eating jellybeans during briefs. The last flight of the "Thundermugs" a legend for another time.

I could add A4 Prez Blosser, CVW-10 and a "paddles" in '67, but he's hardly a pop-up.

Keep up the good work, *A4Ever* is going great.

From: Robert "Roberto" McClellan
To: Dave Dollarhide

I do not know the Trivia answer, but I noticed your email address & thought I would catch up. You may remember I was CO of VMA-142 at NZC when you were CO of VA-203 there. (*Catch-up talk ensued*)

I do have one item that might be worthy of inclusion in the magazine. As I recall, the A-4B & C models only had 3 hard points, which was problematic. Either you ran the double-bubble configuration with 300-gallon drops, leaving only the centerline hard-point for ordnance, or you ran a 400-gallon centerline giving you the two wing hard points for ordnance. If you were not doing ordnance work (specifically no racks for delivery), the 400-gallon centerline gave the same range as the double-bubble 300-gallon tanks under the wings.



So, at NAS JAX, our ordnance folks were forever doing the up-the-down-drop-tank change from a centerline 400-gallon to the wing 300-gallon tanks. The old A-4 heads insisted that you needed the 2 wing tanks to land on if you had an unsafe gear problem. Then someone in VA-203 landed an A-4L at NAS JAX with a 400-gallon centerline and wing racks, after an unsafe gear indication. And the aircraft was back flying in no time at all, one tank & 2 racks thrown away. Cheap insurance. So, when we got the Super Fox aircraft in the mid '70s, I do not think we ever operated with the double-bubble configuration, just a centerline 400-gallon tank, with or without wing racks.

From: Dave Dollarhide
To: Robert McClellan

Thanks for touching base. Yeah, 142 and 203 were like sister squadrons. The A-4L gear up landing at NAS JAX was actually an unintentional gear up on runway 09, but you're right, there was only minor damage to one wingtip. (*The airplane was actually configured with a 300-gallon tank and PMBRs [Practice Mulible Bomb Racks]. The only time I saw a 400-gallon tank was during ops from Yankee Station in '67. - Hide*)

From: Andy Avila, Georgetown, TX
Subject: VA-831 From The 1950's and 60's

My name is Andy Avila. My father, Andrew Avila, was a pilot and eventually C/O of Squadron VA-831 at Floyd Bennett Field during the 1950's and early 1960's. I recently discovered skyhawk.org, and it brought back many memories of time spent as a child at the airfield. I also noticed you do not have much pre-1968 information for VA-831. I have a collection of early 1960's photos of aircraft and squadron members (including names), as well as my father receiving the Noel Davis Trophy. Let me know if they would be of use, I would be happy to email digital copies.

From: Terry Wolf

Great to hear from you! I've flown over Floyd Bennet Field many times on approach to JFK. That must have been a great place to operate an A-4, especially in the '60s. I'm excited to see what you have and would appreciate whatever you can send me. I will pass the photos on to our web master. We are going through a transition with a new host for the web site, but we will include your photos in our archives as soon as possible.

continued...

Send your letters to sa-journal-editor@skyhawk.org

Send your letters to sa-journal-editor@skyhawk.org

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

continued..

From: Andy Avila

I uploaded all photos and docs in my possession to Google-Drive and gave access to the three email addresses in my reply.



VA-831 Fury being refueled by a VA-83 Skyhawk.

■ **From: Dave Page**

Subject: Steve Pollock article, *Only One Up There*

Great photos and great memories. Steve Pollock's article in the magazine is a good story. On a Med cruise with him, I remember that the ship was allowing people to buy motorcycles and bring them home on the ship from the Med. Just as he made his purchase of a Bultaco in Barcelona, the ship declared all space was full and no more bikes were allowed. He vowed to bring it aboard and did, disassembled and in several parachute bags and other packages. He won!

At the time, our ACHO was John Stevens, a red haired, red and freckled faced LCDR, who had a short fuse. When Steve Pollock checked aboard and first saw John, he exclaimed, "The Pink Fink!" It seems John had endured that nickname from his nugget days flying A-4s in combat, and thought after this long time, it was forgotten. Not to be, and he was quite unhappy every time he heard it! You have to be able to take a joke to be a naval aviator.

■ **From Tracey Dickinson**

I am the younger brother of Charles Richard Dickinson. He was the casualty in the A4 accident on May 24th 1984. The last name is spelled wrong in the incident write up. If I can be of further help. Let me know.

■ **From: Gary Verver**

Thanks Tracey, I've made the correction and updated the VC-5 page.

■ **READER TRIVIA ANSWERS - J-65 Oil System**

Thanks for the participation!

■ **From: Bob Paul SDO VMA-225**

I don't remember all of the technical aspects of the systems. Just what I remember from my basic understanding. I was attached to VMA-225 for 22 months as a plane captain (Dec 63 to Oct 65) and we had the A4C. A lot of time has passed so I hope I have retained enough to answer your question.

The oil system for the J-65-16, which was on the A4's we had, was known as a Total Loss Oil System. I don't recall if the

pump was plunger type or piston type driven pump. The oil was not scavenged and was vented overboard thru vents on each side of the aircraft. Thus, the A-4A, B, C models had an oil streak on the fuselage. As a plane captain, it was essential to check the oil after each hop and top it off.

I did talk to some mates who were next door to our hanger that flew the A4E with the J-52, which I noticed didn't leave the ugly oil stain. He gave a brief explanation on the that oil system.

The J-52 engine lubrication system is a Self-Contained, High Pressure System that supplies lubrication to the main and rear engine bearings and to the accessory drives. Oil delivered by the engine-driven oil pump is cooled by means of an oil cooler prior to entering the bearing compartments. A breather pressure relief valve vents overboard on the starboard side of the aft fuselage but leaves no oil streak.

■ **From: David Ayres**

The J-65 ports oil overboard as a mist. The quick test for the condition of the engine was rundown time at shutdown, typically around 180 seconds. I had one stop after eight seconds! DIR came back as both center main and rear main bearing failure.

■ **From: Walt Fink**

I forget now, what Armstrong-Siddely called the oil system in their Sapphire engines...something like "flood" or "flow" comes to mind...but the Wright J-65 is a licensed copy of the Sapphire, albeit with several improvements in manufacturing. The oil system has no recovery ability so it's blown over the side. The J-52 is essentially a scaled-down version of the J-57 and has a recirculating system.

■ **From: George Kinsey**

The J-65 had two bearings, #2 and #3 (I think) that used the oil but then pumped it overboard. One exhaust port was on the left side of the fuselage and one was on the right side. The cockpit indication was a flip flop gage that read "Norm" or, if there was low oil and or low pressure, would display a cross hatch.

The J-52 system was a closed system (i.e., a normal system) in that after using the oil, it was returned to the reservoir to be used again. The indication in the cockpit was a pressure gage (nickel gage) plus a light that could be pressed. On preflight with just electrical power on the aircraft, pressing the master TEST switch would illuminate the Low Oil light. This verified that the light and the 80% oil circuitry was working properly. Pressing the master TEST switch plus the LOW OIL light tested the 20% circuitry was working if the LOW OIL light remained illuminated. After start, depressing the LOW OIL light alone indicated greater than 80% oil capacity if the light stayed out or that the quantity was somewhere between 80% and 20% if the light came on. If the LOW OIL light came on by itself, then you had less than 20% oil in the reservoir. NOTE: In the Mike model, all these tests were performed after engine start since there normally was no electrical on the aircraft prior to start.

Read?

you think
we read?

1972 Ghost Riders Memories

Author: Dennis Carroll

Self-Published 2021, 178 pages

Available on Amazon in Print and Kindle Editions

Dennis Carroll and Jim Higgins initiated a project to document a collection of memories from members of Attack Squadron VA-164 aboard the USS Hancock, CVA-19, during the 1972 Vietnam War combat cruise. The result culminated in the publication of the book *1972 Ghost Rider Memories*. Fifteen Ghost Riders contributed several personal remembrances of that combat cruise and other Naval Aviation experiences as well. The compiled stories in this book are a documentation of each individual author's actual experiences, and as these memories are almost a half-century old, in fact, classify them as classic true "Naval Aviation Sea Stories."

The book begins with a short summary of the 1972 deployment and a testament to the Ghost Rider's sailors; a dedication entitled, "Where would we be without them?" The next section is an in-depth discussion of the North Vietnamese "Easter Offensive," the invasion of South Vietnam in the spring of 1972 and the role of airpower. The Ghost Riders were

heavily involved providing close-air-support missions as were the other Hancock CVW-21 squadrons before moving up north to join the air war against targets in North Vietnam. **During the 1972 combat cruise, over 4,000 missions were executed without the loss of a pilot or aircraft.** This was an outstanding accomplishment that required the effort, leadership, and acceptance of responsibility of the most senior officer to the most junior sailor in the squadron.

The Ghost Riders' personal stories comprise the bulk of the book and provide the reader with a sense of each of the fifteen individual authors: personal remembrances of Alpha Strikes, road reconnaissance missions, and, of course, night carrier landings. These are stories that absolutely capture the intensity of the night carrier landing and combat experience that will make every Attack Naval Aviator reverently say, "Been there...Done that!"

Most of the stories relate details of intense combat sorties or flying around the boat. However, there are a few lighter anecdotes related, including some with the infamous WESTPAC watering-hole, the Cubi Point O'Club, involved. Also, I personally found Johnny Bittick's discussion of the involvement of VA-164



in the evaluation of a prototype Laser Guided Bombing system technology for the Navy during the 1972 deployment particularly interesting owing to my own background in electro-optical systems technology. VA-164 developed coordinated tactics using a prototype China Lake hand-held laser designator using a paired TA-4 designator aircraft and a bomber aircraft and successfully employed them in combat.

I highly recommend this book as it is an outstanding compilation of great "Naval Aviation Sea Stories." BZ to Dennis for convincing the authors to document and share their experiences. I thoroughly enjoyed reading the book, and I personally related to some of the stories, which brought back some of my own memories. I admit that I personally knew some of the authors as I was at NAS Lemoore in VA-127 in 1972 and later in sister squadron VA-212 also deployed aboard the Hancock 1973-1975.

Reviewed by CDR Peter Cole, USNR (Ret)

NEW MEMBERS

John Binford, Willow Grove, PA
Charles Bush, Hanford, CA
George Chalke, Gilbertsville, KY
Randy Compton, Gulf Breeze, FL
Roy Crane, Henderson, NV
Dick Ward, Cumming, GA

Joseph Gilmore, Orange Park, FL
Frank Goral, Elgin, TX
Loren Heesacker, Huntington Beach, CA
Craig Kotla, Fort Worth, TX
Sid Linton, Dunwoody, GA
Michael Murlowski, Scottsdale, AZ

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Smart Hawk

By Jigger

Bill "Jigger" Egen spent three years as a Marine Project Pilot at NWC China Lake.

Smart Hawk was a name I coined (No kidding, really!) for the Engineering, Manufacturing and Development (EMD) phase of the testing of the Angle Rate Bombing System (ARBS) on the A-4M, the first Marine fleet aircraft to receive something smart.

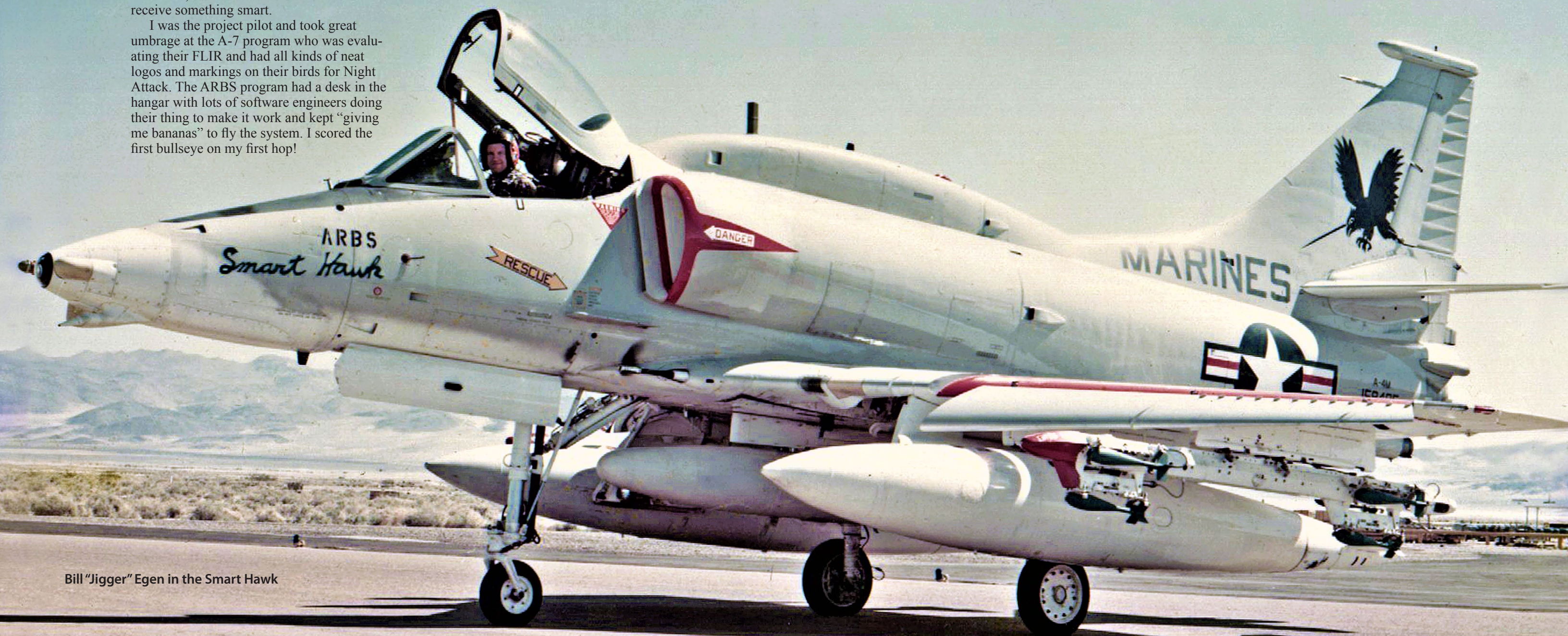
I was the project pilot and took great umbrage at the A-7 program who was evaluating their FLIR and had all kinds of neat logos and markings on their birds for Night Attack. The ARBS program had a desk in the hangar with lots of software engineers doing their thing to make it work and kept "giving me bananas" to fly the system. I scored the first bullseye on my first hop!

It was basically the Norden Bomb sight regarding the math but answered a 1965 problem of target acquisition in 1978! Smoke and dust would cause a break lock or not allow acquisition at all in some cases. ARBS used a dual mode tracker composed of both a laser and visual system (Similar to the Walleye). Hughes was the aggressive contractor and it went like wild fire into the AV-8B after the A-4M.

The short and long story is that my Dad, a commercial artist, was visiting us at the "Lake" and I told him about the mighty A-7 "Wonderhorse," with the hundreds of software engineers and massive facilities, saying that I wanted to beat our chest also. We kicked it around, and in a few hours, he had created a stencil showing a hawk with a lock on a target and *SMART HAWK* as the new marketing idea.

Dean Elliot, the Naval Weapons Center (NWC) program manager, thought it was great and gave me the go ahead, so that Saturday, we stenciled the bird. By Monday, I was getting my ass chewed by the Maintenance Officer and I just said talk to Dean. :-). Anyway, we got our press and Hughes didn't blink, but later asked what the hell does Smart Hawk have to do with the AV-8B?

OOPS!



Bill "Jigger" Egen in the Smart Hawk

FUEL AIR EXPLOSIVE (FAE) AT CHINA LAKE

... AS THE SCUTTLEBUT GOES

Information taken from a conversation with
Gary Verver and Bill “Jigger” Egen

JIGGER

CBU-55 was low-speed FAE and CBU-72 was high-speed for tactical jet use – they were available in the early 70s. They both contained three bomblets which were parachuted onto the target and a probe extended from the bomblet to set off the charge to achieve the maximum over pressure as a kill mechanism. Frightening to watch but very predictable at a critical distance where the overpressure effects were rapidly decreased, e.g., no frags.

Later on, an R&D effort developed the FAE II with the 500lb version being called the BLU-95 and the 2000lb version being called the BLU-96. These were unitary free-fall weapons that were initiated with an explosive charge followed by a detonation charge when the fuel/air mixture was optimum based on time. I did drop 4 BLU-95s on Baker Range, supposedly the first multiple drop of all-up-rounds.

There were many other FAE attempts like CATFAE for the USMC to ground launch a fuel air explosive to set off mines... not sure it was successful.

Tragedy arrived sometime later that decade. Ordnance guys were trying to police a low-speed FAE drop zone and set off a dud bomblet. All three were killed (shaky on the details but that was constantly discussed as we “de-milled” the CBU-72 to make CBU-88 Smokeyes.)

GARY

The 1963 President Kennedy air power demo at China Lake included FAX, the initial acronym for FAE as it was called at the time, but was actually ground fired next to a B-29. A Shrike was fired and missed, but the target was well salted with HE which was detonated on cue and nobody in the reviewing stands knew the difference.

The following page shows photos of an actual FAE test against a two-story building, approximately 1970.

continued...



Below are photos of an actual FAE test against a two-story building, approximately 1970.



THE FIRST MARINE A4 SQUADRON

By Don "Jake" Jacobsen

At the recent "Marine Skyhawker" reunion held in Las Vegas, October 21-October 24, 2021, it was discovered that I was one of the first Marine Corps pilots to fly the A4, and the only member of VMA-224 (vintage 1956) present at the reunion. The organizers, Todd (Hun) Frommelt and Mark (Senator) Williams, asked that I write an item about my experiences of that time.

continued...



VMA-224 Douglas Aircraft Company

THE FIRST MARINE A4 SQUADRON CONT . . .

It all started after I completed Naval Flight training in May of 1956 and received orders to MCAS El Toro, where I was assigned to VMA-224. I reported for duty that June. At that time, we were flying the F9F-5 Panther, built by the “Grumman Iron Works.”

In July, our squadron was sent to the Douglas aircraft factory in El Segundo, CA, for training in a new aircraft, the A4D-1. We received classroom training in the aircraft systems from the Douglas engineers, the guys who actually built the systems. Shortly after we finished the classroom training, we returned to El Toro and within a few weeks the new A4D-1 started showing up on our flight line. It was a truly beautiful sight.

I can’t tell you the date of my first A4 flight because, later on, during our WESTPAC tour, all of our pilot flight logs and our squadron personnel records were lost in an aircraft accident off Naha, Okinawa. A review of my replacement flight log subsequent to the loss, shows that the earliest A4 I flew after that was BuNo 139919.

To say that my first A4 flight was exciting is an understatement. On take-off and climb out, the F9F-5, with the P&W J48, was a “slug,” straining to reach flying speed, then struggling into the air. To my surprise, the “Scooter,” with the J65, jumped on break release and I was on my way through 5,000’ before I knew it. What a trip! You all know the feeling. The axial flow J65 had a lot more stuff than the centrifugal flow J48. Also, the A4 was much lighter than the F9.

We completed our Fam flights and went to MCAS Mojave (before it was traded to the Air Force for Yuma). While at Mojave we conducted ordnance training, including time on China Lake’s Charlie Range practicing “Idiot Loops.” That was in preparation for our upcoming WESTPAC tour and our SIOP commitment.



Jacobsen, ChuLai.



VMA-224 Bengals.

On September 1, we set sail on the TCVU-92, the USS *Windham Bay*, with our new A4’s aboard, headed for Iwakuni. We couldn’t TransPac because, of course, the A4D-1 didn’t have a probe. BTW, VMA-224 was the first jet squadron to be assigned to and permanently operate from Iwakuni.

As I mentioned earlier, we were given SIOP missions, so our aircraft were equipped with thermal shields (like a hard shell instrument shield) for pilot protection from potential thermal blasts (light flashes).

Our WESTPAC tour included deployments to South Korea, Okinawa and Cubi Point, yes, the “Animal Club” (*O Club-ed*) was in operation back then. We conducted “CarQuals” on the tables in the Club and left the tradition for you guys. We shot up Wild Horse Creek range, among other target areas.

During our last deployment to “Cubi,” an A4 pilot crashed one back here in CONUS and CNO grounded all A4’s world-wide. That left our squadron away from home base for an undetermined time, so our Skipper asked for, and received, a “one-time flight” authorization so we could get back home. The plan was to hop scotch from Cubi to Naha to Iwakuni. In order to effect any minor repairs to planes that stopped for refueling in Naha, we loaded up 19 of our finest maintenance men and were going to plant them there. The team and all personnel files and pilot log books were loaded onto a C-119 and sent to Naha. As it happened, a lone AD pilot wanted to get back to Iwakuni, but couldn’t fly solo over the water. He was allowed to tag along on the wing of the C-119. On the approach to Naha, they hit some weather and, during the approach, they collided and crashed into the sea. All hands, and all squadron records were lost, the worst moment in our tour.



VMA-224 Over Fujii.

The flight I was in, led by George Ward (later KIA in RVN), was able to make it non-stop from Cubi to Iwakuni. As we were flying along, I could see George madly spinning his Jeppesen (*Manual navigation slip wheel – Ed*) making sure we could make it. We did, after a 3.1 hr. flight. We had about a 100 kt tailwind to help us.

We completed our tour and returned to CONUS on Sept 30, 1958. It was a 14-month tour, which was normal at that time. (As a personal note, I missed my elder son’s first and second birthdays because of the tour length.)

I can’t explain what an honor and pleasure it was to be one of the first Marines to fly the A4. It was just a stroke of luck. To top it all off, I was also deeply honored to fly with some of the best pilots I’ve known. I would like to meet up with them again before I leave this planet.

So, if any of you know any of these 1956 vintage ‘224 A4 pilots, please let me know where they are. They are guys like: Walt Jupp, “Slats” Combs, Ed Birzer, Paul Frappollo, Don Kifer, “Red” Wallace, Dan Prudhomme and Bob Guay. I can be contacted at dejacobsen@me.com.

(Editor’s Note: In addition to the A4D-1 Jake also flew the A4D-2N (A-4C) and TA-4F.)

U.S. Army Skyhawk?

By Tommy H. Thomason



The possibility has been mentioned in a Skyhawk Association *Newsletter* before. This is a more complete description of the program, thanks to Tony Chong, Dave Dollarhide, Bill Egen, Michael Fortin, Gary Verver, and Jim Winchester.

The U.S. Army has maintained an active interest in the use of aircraft for battlefield surveillance since the Civil War, when the Union Army established its Balloon Corps, followed by early adoption of the Wright Brothers' airplane (It purchased the first Wright Military Flyer in 1909). Thereafter, it acquired a succession of simple, small airplanes for surveillance and utility missions, with the last being the Cessna L-19 Bird Dog, which first flew in 1949.

Following the Korean War, the Army embarked on an L-19 replacement program, to possibly be a small jet aircraft suitable for artillery spotting, tactical reconnaissance, and close air support. In late 1956, the Army borrowed three Cessna T-37A primary trainers from the Air Force and conducted extensive evaluations with them over the next few years to develop detailed requirements for the mission. The result was a joint USMC/US Army program (the Marines subsequently dropped out of the program) to develop a twin turbo-prop STOL airplane for the mission, the Grumman OA-1 (subsequently OV-1) Mohawk. It first flew in April 1959 and was in service in 1961.

Meanwhile, the Army continued to be interested in an airplane for deep-penetration missions (specifically combat surveillance and target

acquisition, not close air support) at jet dash speeds and developed a set of requirements for one. Initial testing was focused on low altitude, high-speed performance in adverse weather conditions. The requirements also included the ability to operate from short and minimally prepared surfaces. In mid-1961, it held a come-as-you-are evaluation of light tactical jets. Three contenders, the G.91R; the N-156F (eventually procured by the USAF as the F-5A); and a somewhat modified A4D-2N were made available by Fiat, Northrop, and Douglas respectively for trials held at NAS Jacksonville and an unpaved satellite landing field near NAAS Saufley Field.

The G.91R was the only one of the three airplanes that was originally designed and qualified for temporary basing on unpaved fields. It was actually being operated from them in NATO exercises in Europe. As a

result, all Fiat did for the trials was paint the airplane in U.S. Army markings, a marketing ploy that Douglas and Northrop apparently didn't think of or perhaps didn't out of concern for offending their primary customer, the U.S. Navy and Air Force respectively (subsequent to that evaluation, Northrop did add Army markings to at least one of the F-5s, perhaps out of frustration with the Air Force not being interested in buying more than the two prototypes).

Like the G.91R, the N-156F was already equipped with a drag parachute for shorter landing rollouts; after some initial problems with soft-field operation, Northrop modified the landing gear of one by substituting a dual-wheel nose gear (which meant that the landing gear couldn't be retracted) and oversized main gear tires. It was the only contender with afterburning engines and supersonic speed in level flight.

continued...

From left to right, an A4D-2N modified for unprepared field operation, the Northrop N-156F with landing gear modifications, and a Fiat G.91R





The two Douglas modifications for the Army evaluation were a dual-wheel main landing gear and the addition of a braking parachute for short landing rolls in a container under the aft fuselage.

Douglas borrowed two A4D-2Ns, BuNos 148483 and 148490 from the Navy for the evaluation. In order to improve the Skyhawk's ability to operate from short and unpaved fields, these were quickly modified with a braking parachute for the shortest possible landings and a dual-wheel main landing gear to provide high-flotation for soft-field operations. The closest parachute to hand was the huge one from the A3D Skywarrior, which had a maximum landing weight 3 ½ times that of the A4D. It was packed into a long cylinder mounted under the aft fuselage in place of the tail hook. The main landing gear retracted the same way it did on the stock A-4, with the wheels rotating 90 degrees on the way up, but the forward gear doors had to be removed because the lower of the two wheels extended below the surface of the wing when the landing gear was up. Large fairings were therefore added that surrounded the exposed wheel and reduced its drag.

The trials took place during June and July. The grass field, known as Site 8A, was only 3,000 feet long. According to Drury Wood, the Douglas project pilot for the evaluation, the A4D was a clear winner in the landing demonstrations: the drag chute resulting in rollouts of less than 500 feet. There was no clear edge in takeoff capability among the contenders. All three airplanes were also able to taxi through a section of the field that had been made seriously muddy.

Unfortunately, there was a fatal accident during the trials. Italian Air Force test pilot Captain Riccardo Bignamini was killed on 27 July while demonstrating a G-91R takeoff augmented by JATO; one of the bottles malfunctioned.

The big A3D landing parachute dwarfed the little A4D and resulted in very short landings, which minimized the stress on the landing gears imposed by operation on minimally prepared landing fields.



R. G. Smith painting – permission by his daughter, Shar Marsh and Boeing Aircraft.

In conjunction with the evaluation, Douglas proposed its Model 840 to the Army. It included the five-pylon weapons installation that would be incorporated on the Navy's A4D-5. (R.G. Smith Artist's Concept)

Although the demonstration was successful—and the A4D reportedly “won”—no production contract resulted. With encouragement from the Air Force and given the successful introduction of the OV-1, the Army opted to focus primarily on helicopters for its transport and close air support requirements. It also continued to rely on the L-19, now designated O-1, for the duration of the Vietnam War.

As reported by Jim Winchester in his excellent book, *Douglas A-4 Skyhawk – Attack & Close Support Fighter Bomber*, both of the Skyhawks were returned to their standard A4D-2N configuration and assigned to operational squadrons, making at least three combat cruises between them. BuNo 148490 was overhauled to be an A-4L and operated by the Navy reserve; it is now a pole-mounted display in Blue Angel markings on Interstate 10 near Pensacola, Florida. BuNo 148483 was subsequently sold to Singapore and converted to its A-4SU configuration.

continued...



Possibly in conjunction with this evaluation, Michael Fortin has come up with a mystery involving the Army's use of A4D-1 BuNo 139930. According to its aircraft history card, it was assigned to the U.S. Army for 22 months starting in August 1959. One possibility is that the Army used it for a preliminary evaluation of the Skyhawk for its surveillance requirement requiring a jet as it did with a Navy T2V-1 SeaStar.



★ **TAPS** ★

For lists of A-4 KIA and operational losses, members can sign into <http://skyhawk.org> and go to the "Ready Room."



TAPS notices may be sent to Dave Dollarhide, davedollarhide@msn.com

Bob Violett, 3/21/2020, Winter Springs, FL
 Richard G. Wood "Woody," 11/21/2021, Lexington, KY
 Hal Clark, 11/7/2021, Newport, NC
 Tom Svoboda, 4/29/2020, Fox River Grove, IL
 Dave 'Tater' Peeler/10/30/2021, Triangle, VA
 Donald L Harvey, 1/5/2021

HOOK 21 Follow-up Fact

Skyhawk Association friend

Lonni "Eagle" McClung

Reports the final attendance

for "Hook 21" was...



3,520!!!

"Five Miles on Straight In with Hung What?"

By Jim "Nomad" Lawrence

As a 21-year-old first balloon nugget, Naval / Marine Aviator (One of the last to receive wings from the MARCAD program), flying A4's out of Chu Lai in 1968-1969, I was fortunate enough to experience one of those funny moments that one never forgets. Under the umbrella of MAG-12, there were four Scooter squadrons, three flying the A-4E and one, the A-4C.

There I was on this bright and sunny morning, number one holding short for takeoff, while leading a section of Skyhawks on a CAS mission. There were another ten or twelve A-4's, F-4's and A-6's also in the hold short area.



Jim Lawrence at Chu Lai

One becomes accustomed to hearing fellow warriors calling the tower to inform them that one or more pieces of weaponry has refused to depart from the aircraft for whatever reason and will be on the airplane for landing. "Chu Lai tower Hellborne / Lovebug (side number) is five miles straight with hung ordinance" didn't really raise any eyebrows. However, when "something" different comes over the airways it tends to perk one's ears up.

So, while holding short (of the runway – Ed) waiting to launch, there was a transmission that raised everyone's eyebrows and certainly got everyone's attention. It looked like a flock of flamingoes, because suddenly all the heads that had been looking down into our cockpits, suddenly in unison, came up and focused on the approach corridor to the runway. On tower frequency came this call from an A-4 pilot... "Chu Lai tower, Hellborne (side number) is five miles straight in with **hung elephants**," to which the tower replied.

"Hellborne, say again!"

Hellborne replied, "Tower, Hellborne is now three miles straight in, **hung elephants**."

I can only imagine the tower guys looking at each other and saying WTF! I know in the hold short area we were all looking at one another as if to say, "What did he say?"

So, it seemed with a bit of reluctance, the tower cleared Hellborne to land. By now, this has peaked our interest and I'm pretty sure we were all thinking the same thing. "OK, I gotta see this!" Well, what we saw shall forever be implanted into our memories. As the A-4E went by us, there on stations two and four, very securely strapped to the MER's were two beautifully hand-carved mahogany elephants!



VMA-211



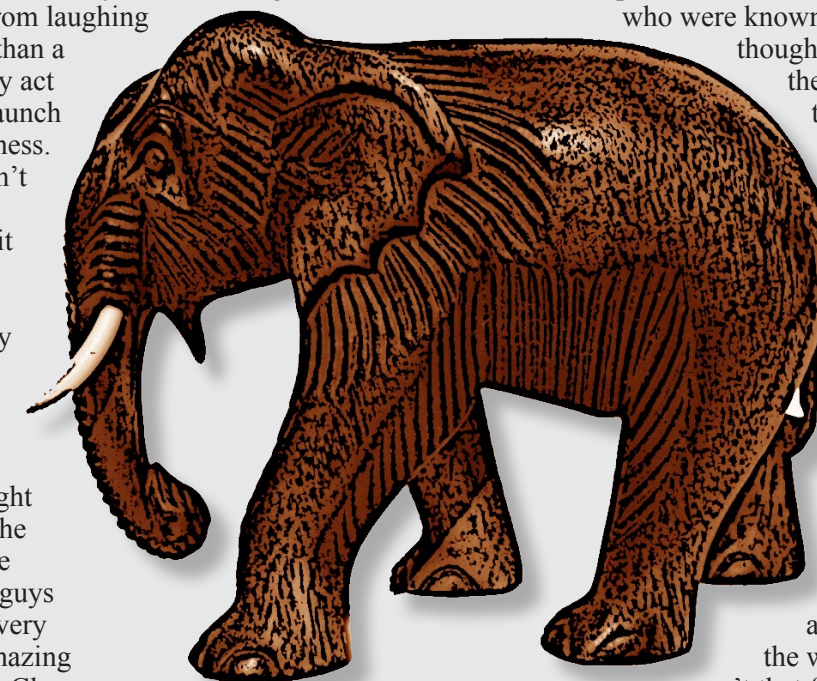
Jim Lawrence receiving a medal.



MARCAD Lawrence

In total disbelief we all began laughing so hard, and with open cockpits, you could actually hear it over the sound of the idling engines! Since I was #1 holding short, the tower called me and said "Hellborne, you saw that... right?" To which I replied, "Yep tower, two hung elephants on Hellborne!" Needless to say, after clearing the tears from my eyes from laughing so hard it took more than a few minutes to get my act together in order to launch and take care of business. I'm pretty sure I wasn't alone.

Backing up a bit, it probably needs to be said that these "elephants" had obviously come from Thailand. Occasionally, on a rare mission, we would divert over to Ubon to spend the night and be the guests of the Air Force guys. These were the courageous guys going "downtown" every day and they were amazing hosts in every regard. Clean sheets, nice air-conditioned room and a great meal in the O'Club was certainly a treat for us Marines. The Air Force line guys were just as amazing... and a bit mischievous as well. Having diverted there once and upon returning to climb in our jets the next morning, we discovered that from tip to tail and top



to bottom both of our jets were completely covered in half moon and owl insignias! We loved it!

So, my good friend who had purchased these treasures and done this amazing feat was now faced with how to get them back to Chu Lai. So, he sought out the Air Force line guys for a hopeful solution to his problem. The Air Force line guys, who were known for being creative,

thought that strapping these two elephants to the bomb racks was a great idea! What could possibly go wrong? My buddy said it seemed like a solid solution to him. Therefore, in order to ensure the safety of the elephants while enroute back to Chu Lai, he flew with his gear and flaps down at approach speed all the way back! It really wasn't that far between Ubon

and Chu Lai anyway.

Obviously, the upper rank structure of his squadron and at MAG-12 somehow failed to see the humor in this amazing aeronautical feat that we all felt was certainly decoration award-winning material.

Puresome Unplugged

~ YP's Excellent Adventures ~

ORAL TRADITION #406

By Jack "Youthly Puresome" Woodul

There wasn't a "commander's moon" out. No commanders either, but Puresome was. It was real dark and Puresome wasn't having a good night.

"Power...Power...Don't Climb!" hollered Paddles, as Puresome once again sunk into the mysterious black suck-hole behind the ship, crammed on too much power and sailed over the top of all four arresting wires, his tailhook leaving nothing but sparks on the flight deck.

"Puresome grasped ahold of himself for one more shot at the deck, before he had to try and find the tanker, which he really did not want to do in the bumpy darkness."

"Bolter! Bolter!" radioed a disgusted Paddles as the position lights of Puresome's A-4 disappeared into the darkness off the angle deck.

"Young Puresome's got a bit of wind up tonight, if you don't mind me saying so, sir," yelled an assistant LSO, who had just written a highly lyrical, thirty-line description of Puresome's last pass at the blunt end of the boat, as seen by the grizzled senior LSO holding the pickle. "Yes...but, then, don't we all?" yelled Paddles back at the little group huddled on the platform against the wind, rain and clouds of stack gas the boat's engineer had conveniently blown in time for Puresome's approach. "Or do we?" he added cryptically. His assistant dutifully added these comments to Puresome's pass in the LSO book.

"Yaaaaaa!" Puresome screamed into his oxygen mask, "this can't be happening to me—I'm too good...had to be a hook skip...pitching deck. Paddles suckered me into it...vertigos were in my eyes...hole in my glove, and I had a headache..."

Puresome's search for a convenient rationalization for temporarily looking bad was interrupted by the necessity of recovering from the unusual attitude the twitchy little A-4 had managed while the driver was absent without leave from flying instruments.

"Yaaaaaa!" Puresome screamed into his oxygen mask with the true knowledge that 600 feet over the ocean at night was not the time to lose your instrument scan. It had almost led to the dreaded

"bust your hiney" syndrome. Puresome locked into the ABBA JABBA gyro horizon and concentrated on keeping the shiny side up as a starter.

"Sidewinder 411, say your state," queried someone safe in CATC with a cigar and a cup of coffee.

Puresome had time for a stick, a rudder, a throttle and no time for any instrument as peripheral as a fuel gauge, especially no time for dumb shit questions, like "say your state."

"Ax me something in the middle," squeaked 411.

Annoying things like say our state," or "say your gross" involved totaling up tank quantities or bombs and stuff hanging under wings. Even in better moments, it took all Puresome's willpower not to say "West Texas." or, "You're gross," instead of doing the figgerin. Puresome held to holistic views like "a whole bunch," or "not enough!"

Naturally, management took a dim view of this kind of thing and once his skipper and the Air Boss invited Puresome in for a little senior citizen



Jack "Youthly Puresome" Woodul

vivisection of a J.O. after the ship had asked him, "say your position," and Puresome had replied, "Doggy!"

But, finally, Puresome was able to take one eyeball off the "ABBA JABBA" and slew it over for a quick peek at the fuel gauge, which indicated a tad more than not enough. Buoyed by this information, Puresome grasped ahold of himself for one more shot at the deck before he had to try and find the tanker, which he really did not want to do in the bumpy darkness.

So, Puresome settled down, stooged around the CCA pattern, fought the suck hole to a draw and impacted the deck acceptably.

"Yes! Are we not men?" exulted Puresome, as the two-wire dragged him to halt.

Safely back in the ready room, Puresome was greeted by a bunch of touching, caring, sharing, feeling, nurturing, supportive sixties kind of guys, who had decorated the black board with witty sayings and cartoons and were very helpful with his self-image.

Since Bolter Harassment Coordinator was one of Puresome's collateral duties, he expected no less when it was his time in the barrel. However, their mindless critiques were as the babble of fishwives.

"I may have bolstered some, but it wasn't because I'm no good," Puresome explained to Weed on the way up to the Dirty Shirt Wardroom for double cheeseburgers mit egg and jolly green bug juice.

Weed just nodded. It was absolutely, without a doubt, the only thing to say.



TRIVIA ANYONE?

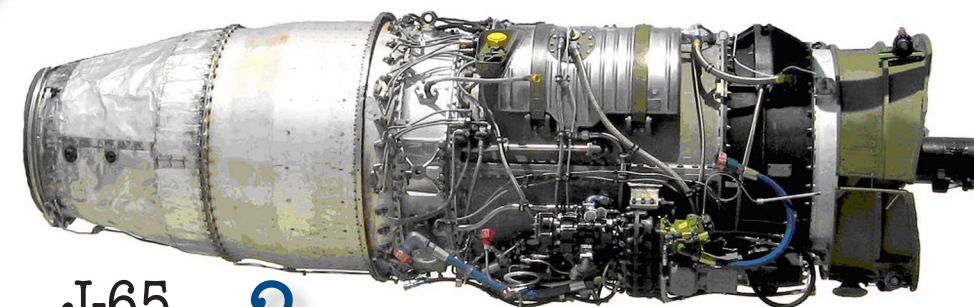
from Dave Dollarhide



The Question:



The Answer:



J-65



Developed by Armstrong Siddeley Corp. as the British *Sapphire* engine, an early axial-flow turbojet, was later produced under license in the U.S. by the Curtiss-Wright Corp. as the **J-65**. It was installed in early model Skyhawks and other military jets from the fifties and early sixties to take advantage of the higher thrust and simplicity of installation over the earlier centrifugal-flow engines. A few of those J-65 aircraft were the F-11, F-86, FJ Fury, and B-57.

Still in use today, J-65 uses a "total loss" oil system, as the center and rear main engine bearings do not scavenge and recycle oil back through the engine. Those bearings have oil provided by

two metering pumps and compressor air to the bearing cavities to blow excess oil and smoke overboard. One bearing cavity discharges on the right and the other on the left side of the fuselage, as seen in the photo below. The front bearing cavity and accessory gear case oil does recycle back to the reservoir for reuse.

Since the system is losing oil as it operates, the quantity needs to be monitored as appropriate to ensure the loss rate is at least one quart per hour, a figure that was widely accepted. Also, many operators require that a record be maintained for the engine "run-down-time." An A-4C I was flying a few years

ago, with a newly overhauled engine, averaged one minute and forty seconds. Wind up the tailpipe or down the intakes never changed that number more than 10 seconds or so, but a worsening run-down-time, or a reading of less than 60 seconds, should ground the airplane.

The Pratt and Whitney **J-52** scavenged and recycled all oil for reuse in the engine. It was used in the A-4E and all subsequent Skyhawk models.

See:

Take No Prisoners – Letters to the Editor section for reader replies.





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