

The Intake

Journal of the Super Sabre Society
Published Thrice a Year: March, July and November



— Hun “Fine Art” Collection —

Full Team of circa '67 T-Birds “Dancing the sky on laughter-silvered wings,” somewhere in “Never, Never, Land?”

Artist: Ken Chandler - See Page 2

The Intake

Summer 2008, Vol. 1, Issue 7

JOURNAL OF THE SUPER SABRE SOCIETY

- 3 Staff Corner
- 4 Incoming/Outgoing Correspondence
- 6 Stake Your Claim
By R. Medley Gatewood
- 8 Three Taps on the Shoulder
By Ralph Taylor (RIP)
“... ‘prequel tales’ ...”
- 11 ‘58 TDY Aviano Adventures
By Alan “Lad” Duaine
“*Them were the days!*”
- 14 Too Late... Too Late
By Jack Doub
“*This day would haunt number Five forever.*”
- 17 General Landon Visits Base, Flies in 50th Bird
By Tom Swalm
Cold War News Flash from Hahn
- 19 Wheelus Tiger Town Remembered
By Don Delauter
Fun and games at Tiger Town
- 21 No-fault Gear Up Landing
By Don Nichols
“*No supervisory error and they did away with night mobile!!!*”
- 22 Bomb Burst
By Merrill A “Tony” McPeak
“*... [structural] failure can happen at loads much lower than ultimate static strength.*”
- 27 Odds and Ends
- 28 Bonus Historical Safety Cartoons
By William Kershner
- 29 The Purge Door Incident
By Jack Hartmann
Humor in the Air...
- 30 Book Review Time
By Ron Standerfer
More Wild Weasel Stuff
- 31 Fleagle and More
Contacts, Credits, Reminders, Closing Remarks



Leadership

President	Bill Gorton
Vice President	Jack Van Loan
Exec. Director	Les Frazier
Treasurer	Lee Graves
Counsel	Ross Crossland
Procurement	Dave Hatten
Secretary	Art Oken
Membership	Pete Davitto
	Sloan Brooks
Webmaster	Ron Doughty

The Intake - Journal of the SSS

Editor	R. Medley Gatewood
Photo Editor	Shaun Ryan
Asst. Editors	John J. Schulz Jim Quick
Contributing Editors	Jack Doub Jack Hartmann Bob Krone Wally Mason Ron Standerfer
Associate & Honorary Editors	Rosemary Stewart Ann Thompson
Graphic Designer	Sara Gosselin
Printing	Jim Allen,
Consultant	Allied Printers



The front cover Hun Fine Art (used with copyright permission) is the intellectual property of retired USAF CMSgt. Ken Chandler, another American Patriot. See <http://www.usa-patriotism.com/graphics/airforce-01.htm> and http://www.af.mil/art/media_search.asp?q=chandler&page=3. Please visit Ken's web site at <http://www.cafepress.com/columellaarts> or call at (928) 685-3462 Wickenburg, AZ



The Dues Situation and The Intake

Please read the **most recent** “SSS Dues - Course 101” message from the Board of Directors in the Staff Corner Department on the next page. If need be, contact:
Treasurer (Lee Graves) at email hgraves@austin.rr.com /phone (512) 784-3943, or
Editor (R. Medley Gatewood) at rgatewood@comcast.net /phone (505) 293-8396.

The Intake and its contents, unless otherwise credited, are copyrighted by the Super Sabre Society Inc., d.b.a. **Super Sabre Society, P.O. Box 3100, Georgetown, TX 78627**. The society is open to all F-100 Fighter Pilots, F-100 Wild Weasel Bears and F-100 Squadron Flight Surgeons. Associate memberships will be offered at the discretion of the Membership Committee. There is no political agenda, although we support and respect the office of the President of the United States. There is no religious agenda, although men who trusted their lives to a slatted wing and a single J57 engine also trust in a higher authority. There is no social agenda, except to meet each other in mutual respect and admiration. We are the men who flew the mighty Hun!
Visit our Web site frequently at www.supersabresociety.com.

Staff Corner

From the President's Desk

Greetings from Park City. It snowed yesterday (June 7, 2008) but only down to 8M (our house is at 7M). Soon (maybe by late July) I can start playing golf—a game I recently took up just so I could play during our next reunion. Speaking of our next reunion, it is not too early to start planning your attendance. Sign up now if you want a place on the Red Flag bus or to play golf. See additional info on all the reunion doings on Page 18 in this issue of *The Intake*. What with airline fares heading for the ionosphere, it might be best to reserve early. Of course, you take the chance that your airline of choice may have gone south by next April.

Now on to some business. Please take note of the column to the right. It provides some essential info about how to determine if you are up to snuff on your dues. Read and heed if you want to continue to receive *The Intake*. I might also add that you must be paid up for 2009 if you want to attend all the gala events at our second reunion. If you ain't paid up, you'll be missed. (*The Sign-in Desk will check dues status and accept payment, but you should have paid dues on or before January 1, 2009. Ed.*)

Finally, below you will find an announcement of the upcoming election of SSS officers. Because we staggered the tours of our officers when we put together our bylaws you now have the opportunity to nominate a SSS member to serve as VP, Secretary and/or Executive Director. The pay is low, actually zero, but the honor of serving your fellow Hun Drivers is truly something you will be proud to tell your grandkids. Seriously, should any of you out there want to put your name in nomination for one of these positions please follow the instructions below.

We've had some fine Hun Drivers go west since the last *Intake*, but we have also picked up some as well. So, once again I ask you to get the word out that we exist and sign some more up. Every member get a member.

Cheers,
Bill

Election of Super Sabre Society Officers

Per the Bylaws of the Super Sabre Society, President/Chairman Bill Gorton has convened a Nominating Committee to submit a slate of nominees for the offices of: **Vice President/Vice Chairman, Secretary and Executive Director.**

The incumbents have tossed their hats into the ring for another term. They are, respectively: Jack Van Loan, Art Oken and Les Frazier

SSS Members in good standing may nominate other members (including themselves) to compete for these offices. The nomination period will open on 15 August 2008 and close 15 October 2008. Nominations will be accepted via the Internet and USPS mail. Nominations via snail mail must be postmarked NLT 15 October 2008. The full slate of nominees will be published in the December 2008 edition of *The Intake*.

Voting for the slate of officers will begin on 1 January 2009 and run through 1 March 2009. Voting will be conducted over the Internet and USPS mail. Ballots via snail mail must be postmarked NLT 1 March 2009.

Election results will be announced at the SSS Reunion (31 March – 2 April, 2009) at the Gold Coast Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas.

Note: Special Toss-Bombs will be sent defining the nomination and voting processes. Our web-master, Ron "Rowdy" Doughty, has created an easy and terrific way for our SSS members to nominate and vote for the offices.

The Nominating Committee is comprised of Sloan Brooks (slbb72@gmail.com, 512-249-6777), Bob Dunham (rdunham45@sbcglobal.net, 512-306-0482) and Pete Davitto (pdavitto@alltel.net, 706-947-1636), Questions should be directed to one of these members.

*** SSS Dues - Course 101 ***

Issue Six had a Message from the Board of Directors about the A, B, C's of SSS Dues Policies and how that fits with whether or not members were entitled to receive copies of this journal. The bottom line was that if you're not up to date on your dues, you won't be getting further copies until you get paid up.

We've had a fairly positive response to that dues message, but we're not anywhere near that ol' "Zero Defect" goal. There are about 96 guys who are two years behind! We call that "In Arrears Two," and those guys are getting a letter instead of this issue of *The Intake* and this Dues Course 101. The letter says they need to send in the \$50 they owe for two years to get back into "member in good standing" status, and when they do that, we'll send them their copy of this issue. And all will be well for them in the future, **as long as they get their future years dues paid on time (\$25 payable on or before January 1 of each year)!**

Unfortunately, we also have an additional 134 folks who have not paid 2008 dues which were payable on or before January 1, this year. So given that the 120 day grace period allowed by our Bylaws is past, those folks are now "In Arrears One," and **this will be the last issue of *The Intake* they will get until they get paid up for at least 2008!** If you checked your Dues Status on the envelope this issue came in, and it was In Arrears One, **you** need to send in your \$25 ASAP! Or, contact our **treasurer** or **editor** to help you resolve a dispute about your dues status or to **tell you your status** if you didn't notice the status on the envelope and have thrown it away (see Page 2 or 31 for contact data).

In any case, when you pay your dues, make the check out to SSS and send to **Super Sabre Society, P.O. Box 3100, Georgetown, TX 78627. At this late date, you might want to pay for two or more years, as many have.**

Bottom Line: Know your Dues Status (it's in the membership list and on your Intake mailing envelope), and Stay Ahead of the Power Curve!

Incoming/Outgoing – Correspondence

We are pleased to receive long, short, mostly great, and a few not quite so great, correspondence items via various media sources. The overwhelming feedback is very positive. Here are some incoming samples, and outgoing replies, since the last issue. We also include some important items in need of discussion. Ed.



General Comments on Issue Six

Numerous plaudits for The Intake continued to arrive with the publication of Issue Six. “Professional” and “Best issue yet” were common remarks. The staff appreciates each and every comment (positive or negative), especially those that confirm our “onward and upward” unofficial motto. We hope to continue in that direction.

We're pleased with the success rate we've attained by adding a return address on the mailer envelope. (The envelope also now includes your Current Dues Status, to which you should pay close attention.) Only five of 1,178 envelopes were returned for address problems and four were easily identified and resolved. The fifth was sent to Donald O. Kuehn, formerly of New Branufels, TX, and returned marked as “Moved, Left No Address, Unable to Forward.” If anyone knows of where Don is and how to contact him, please let Pete Davitto, our Membership guru, know. See Page 31 for Pete's contact data.



Unknown Author Identifies Himself

Two days after Issue Six was mailed from Fort Worth, TX, member Ford Smart of Fort Walton Beach, FL, called to inquire about his dues status. In the process of resolving that issue, I asked him how he liked this issue and he said he hadn't read much of it except the table of contents and the article about dues status on page three. An hour after his call, he called back and excitedly announced, “That's my story on page 34!” And so the “What Is a Fighter Pilot” story's by-line's “Unknown Author via Wally Mason” mystery is solved!

It turns out that Ford wrote the story shortly after he got to Seymour Johnson in 1962. He was mad as hell at being scheduled for mobile on a Friday night, thus missing the big shindig at the O'Club. Ford says he wrote it in about 30 minutes and later gave a copy to Wayne Fullam (KIA), whose father printed up a batch to give to other members of the unit, and the story took on a life of its own, copies spreading throughout the fighter pilot world.

By 1967, when he got to Thailand, Ford found a stack of copies for folks to take at the Officer's Club, aka the Chaophya Hotel, in Bangkok (yes, it's still in existence, but not as an O'Club). Later, the piece was copyrighted, spread further around the world (a framed copy hung in the Nellis O'Club at one point), and is easily found on the world-wide-web these days (sometimes with and sometimes without credit to the author).

Well, we now have Ford's permission to use his excellent “essay,” and we thank him for his literary achievement during that night mobile tour at Seymour way back when. Ford, you have an open invitation to contribute more essays to our journal... anytime. Thanks on behalf of the membership. Ed.



Archetypical Fighter Pilot Photo Stimulates Memories and a Response

Issue Six, page 34, bottom right photo. If you're looking for an ID, the “leader” is Brad Hosmer, and as best I recollect, the DO of the 48th TFW at the time of the party. But nevertheless, I have an original of the “Last of the Huns” book that was printed after that party was thrown at Lakenheath. That is where that photo came from. THAT has to be the greatest ever “party.” Hosmer also led the gunnery team that went to 5th ATAF flying out of (? just a ways away from Aviano; Rivolto?) where we learned a lot from the Italians!! Like red wine at lunch means the WX is bad and no PM flying! It's all in my memory banks, and I can get some war stories to you if interested. Aviano, Wheelus, Luke, Tuy Hoa. I have my war diary. It's detailed with crew members, locations, BDA, etc. I was with Rusty as one of the F-4 PUKES at Luke, too. Anyway if this helps or you want more let me know. — *Glenn Ramsdale*

Thanks Glenn. We would welcome some of your true action adventure stories. You got about everything right except that this Hosmer's first name is Bill, not his first cousin Brad (a not uncommon ID mistake). We at The Intake also have a copy of the post-party, 32 page “brochure.” We had planned to use more photos from it with this “essay,” but ran out of space. By the time this issue comes out, we will have scanned the whole brochure, turned it into a PDF document, and have it posted on our web site at www.supersabresociety.com. (This mission is now completed. You can find it under the Aux Equipment link, Books/Publications section. All members should check it out and Enjoy!) Ed.

Issue 6 of *The Intake* is up to your usual standards. GREAT magazine! I eagerly await each and every issue. The Archetypical Fighter Pilot featured on the bottom of page 34 is none other than Colonel William (Bill) Hosmer (Hoz). I was in his squadron at Tuy Hoa RVN (308th), and a finer man there is not to be found. He was/is a fantastic leader and has remained a friend. — *Don Schmenk*, You and many others got it right, Don. And I don't just mean just the right first name! Ed.



Sequel to the "F-4 Puke" Patch of Issue Five

This is a continuation of the recent "F-4 Puke" story by Rusty Gideon. I was the 494 TFS CO at the time the F-4 Puke patch came into being. Later, I became the Assistant DO of the 48th TFW. In the spring of '73, the Wing CO (the banner of the patch) was promoted and transferred. Thus, we scheduled a going-away party for him, but this is where we ran into a few complications. The "wing king" and DO had a falling out, so to speak, and the DO took leave so he wouldn't have to be in attendance at the farewell festivities. We (the ops wizards) had decided it most appropriate to present the departing commander with his very own copy of the banned "F-4 Puke" patch. In the absence of the DO, it became my duty to make said presentation. I feel certain that General Pittman cherished that parting shot and gift from the mighty HUN DRIVERS of the 48th TFW. Over and out. — *Terry Cawley*



Esteemed Bear Art Oken Writes

Please accept my congratulations for yet another superb issue of *The Intake* (Spring 2008). Please also convey to Jack Doub my admiration and appreciation for his most excellent article on the F-100F Wild Weasels. I was present at the creation, so to speak, at the USAFTAWC at Eglin AFB in Florida, and at Korat RTAB in Thailand, during the genesis and operational employment of the F-100 Wild Weasels. Accordingly, I can vouch for the accuracy and thoroughness of Jack's account. His narrative and the accompanying photos tell the F-100 Wild Weasel story the way it deserves to be told. His account is factual and dramatic. He captured and related, in a comprehensive and very readable manner, the environment, the participants (aircrews and groundcrews) and the machines (the aircraft and the special electronic warfare equipment involved), that got the vital, challenging and important Wild Weasel job so well done.

Jack, in his great article, makes mention of the second (and final) group of aircrews that comprised the Wild Weasel I (F-100F) force. He mentioned, by name, "Heavy" Dawson, one of the pilots, plus Don Clark, Rick Morgan, Frank O'Donnell and me, four of the electronic warfare officers (EWOs) in that group. For the record, and to commemorate their achievements, I would like to add the names, as best I can remember them, of the other Wild Weasel I aircrews in that second group. All contributed substantially to the proud heritage of the F-100 Wild Weasels. For completeness, I'm including the names mentioned by Jack. I understand the omission of some names from Jack's article was solely as a consequence of space constraints. Here are the names of all the WW I second group aircrew members:

Pilots: Donald "Buns" Frazier (Detachment Commander), Marion "Matt" Tuttle (Detachment Operations Officer), A.B. Brand, Clyde "Heavy" Dawson, Glen Farnsworth, Jerry Proctor, Mark Taylor, Bobby Breault, Jim Marquis, and Daryl Olsen.

EWOs: John Ehmer, Marshall Goldberg, Paul Legan, Don Madden, John Mojica, Frank O'Donnell, Art Oken, Jim Peterka, and Ronnie Reinhardt.

Once again, thanks and "hats off" to all *The Intake* staff for invariably excellent quality issues of the journal, and to Jack Doub particularly for his time and skills as a "reporter," doing the Wild Weasel I story. Very truly yours, — *Art Oken*



Request for Davis-Monthan Memorial Support

The *Daedalians*, *Old Pueblo Flight 12*, are involved in an exciting project designed to honor all of those who have served in the military services! The Daedalian Heritage Memorial Park Project will be established at Davis-Monthan AFB, Tucson, AZ. The project involves building a wall which borders the walkway leading to a POW/MIA display located at the Heritage Warrior Park on base. Several aircraft are also on display in the park, including an F-100, F-105 and F-4, so this location is ideal for a memorial to military services personnel.

The wall will consist of engraved bricks that honor those named thereon and all who served in its totality! Each brick will bear up to three lines with 22 characters per line to specify the name and data about its honoree. The concept is to provide perpetual recognition for those who have done so much for our country. Bricks can be purchased for those LIVING and DECEASED or to recognize personal accomplishments. Engraved bricks cost \$100 which includes long term maintenance and upkeep of the memorial. This is NOT a commercial enterprise and relies on volunteers and our local flight to manage the project.

Those interested in purchasing bricks or seeking additional information about the project can email me at keith.connolly@dm.af.mil, call at (520) 228-5100, or write to D. M. Memorial, P.O. Box 15010, DMAFB, AZ 85708-0010.

Thanks for your support. — *Keith B. Connolly*



A Stake Your Claim—Not: But Worthy of Note—Yes

Despite General Sweeney and AF Manual 66-1 (*Communist Maintenance, Ed.*), I flew the same F-100D and had the same crew chief for a little over four and a half years at Cannon AFB. It is remarkable that I never even had a yellow caution light during the entire time. This may not be a record, but it is intended as a tribute to S/Sgt. Peterson, 474th TFW. His diligence and professionalism will never be equaled in my book. — *Perry Lusby*

Certainly agree that we who flew the Mighty Hun were well served by an equally devoted cadre of maintainers. Those include not only the flight line types but also a wide spectrum of other critical support troops. The contributions of our life support personnel instantly come to mind, particularly those who packed our parachutes! Ed.

And The Beat Keeps Going On!

Stake Your Claim

By R. Medley Gatewood

In the spring issue's closing remarks, we noted that the way this Department is supposed to work is original claim, trump, counter-claim, counter-trump, etc. Well, we may have started a running gun battle because two of our defending champions have leaped on two trumping claims (and me) with a vengeance (steel spiked golf shoes AND red BS flags a-flying)!

On April 1, **Leo Kimminau** put forward a lively defense of his claim to the **Smallest Number of Official Dual Rides and Hours before Hun Solo (three and 4.7 respectively)** which was "bested" by **Dick Hale** with **two dual rides and 2.2 hours**. Leo's email subject was "Clarify or Nit Pick," and it started with, "I would begin by suggesting that he (*Dick*) and you may have played a little 'fast and loose' with the use of 'OFFICIAL'." And then the nit picking began, much of which was valid, but not really relevant to the core issue.

It really all boils down to what the meaning of the word "official" officially is (to paraphrase the infamous utterance of a recent past POTUS when he was in dire straits). Thus began our research and analysis of Leo's beef and his key premise.

There is no question that Leo's checkout was done by the book. That being the AF and TAC regulations that collectively described the prerequisites, requirements, and manner of conduct for "local checkouts" (which varied from "school house" syllabi). Compliance with all that red tape resulted in Leo's checkout being "official," and there's no quibbling with that fact.

The question then becomes, was Dick's checkout conducted per the provisions of those same regulations, and the answer is a resounding "NO!" The applicable Hun regulations were long gathering dust, and did not apply to civilians operating Huns for profit under contract. Bill McCollum, the IP for Dick's checkout, confirms that he was free to check Dick out and solo him based on his personal knowledge of Dick's aviation background and observed performance in dual flight, period.

Therefore, pending further adjudication, the Stake Your Claim (SYC) Department finds that Leo's original claim still stands as the official record for official checkouts in that category. Further, the SYC Department finds that Dick's record be re-titled as **Fewest Number of Dual Rides and Hours before Solo, Period**. This solution seems fair and conforms to the "level playing field" concept of fairness to which this Department subscribes in all instances. Over to you, Dick.

Fire Can Dan Walsh was the other defending champion who filed a counter-claim (on April 14, yet). He rightly noted that the "high flight" record submitted by Butch Vicellio, Jr., on behalf of **Jack Bryant**, did not

completely trump his "high flight" record for the "longest" such flight with KB-50s. Fire Can's 1958 flight was 6,400 NM in 12 hours and 35 minutes, whereas Jack's 1957 flight was "6,710 miles (5,835 NM, 10,805 KM) and 14 hours and four minutes."

Well, to paraphrase the same POTUS quote a little differently, it all depends on what the meaning of "longest" is.

The problem here is that in this claim category, we have two parameters for "longest," i.e., distance flown and flight time. Obviously, Fire Can's ahead in the distance parameter (if you compare apples to apples, i.e., NM to NM, which I failed to do when "vetting" Butch's submission). And Jack clearly has the flight *time* record.

So the solution is to (again) redefine the category. **Fire Can's** claim still reigns as the **longest distance flown on a F-100 non-stop flight supported by KB-50s**, and Butch's claim for **Jack** still holds for **longest flight time flown on a F-100 non-stop flight supported by KB-50s**.

Fire Can's non-stop claims keep getting changed to accommodate new factors introduced by the claim, trump, counter-claim, counter-trump cycle. His original Issue One claim was challenged in Issue Two by **Dick Mason** whose distance beat Fire Can's by 200 NM. But Dick's flight was with KC-135 support, hence the addition of **supported by KB-50s** to Fire Can's original claim. Dick's still standing claim was **6,600 NM and 11 hours and 40 minutes with KC-135s**. Surely we've got someone, or someone who knows someone, who can top that—in either the distance or time parameter?

Here's a new, quick claim from Ed White, who included it with an input about the names of all the Wild Weasel I Project's second group of aviators. (Art Oken used that input to modify his original "Letter to the Editor," see *page four*.) Ed's claim: I claim to be the **only person to have checked out in F-100, F-105 and F-4 Wild Weasel aircraft**. Any takers?

The **shortest Hun flight** (measured in time) **not involving an emergency** claim is 10 minutes including five minutes for STTO, and is presently tied by **Chuck Turner** and **Skip Cornelison**. I mention this only because there's a rumor out there that at least one more tying claim may be headed this way with an interesting story about it too. Head's up, guys!

Monitoring an email last May concerning some unit patches **Craig "Too Tall" Thorson** sent to Joe Vincent, Les Frazier remarked that: *This guy "Too Tall" was recalled to active duty after 9/11 and may be the only Hun Driver still on active duty. Somebody needs to check on this.* —Gar

“Somebody” finally got around to that and here’s Craig’s reply to our inquiry.

“Yes, Gar is correct. I therefore stake claim to **being the last ex-Hun driver on active duty**. I began my Air Force career in 1971. Graduated from UPT (Laredo AFB class 73-02), was a T-37 IP at Laredo and Craig AFBs, transferred to the Iowa Air National Guard (132FW/124FS) Des Moines in 1974, and flew the F-100, A-7 and F-16 before retiring in 1995.

“I returned to active duty (retired aviator recall) in 2001 and plan to remain in until September 2009. I’m presently on the staff at AETC Headquarters, Randolph AFB, serving as Chief, Command Fighter Training Resources. I’m truly living a dream...60 years old—still on active duty and still able to hop in the back seat of the Viper for an occasional ‘blast from the past.’ I have fond memories of the Hun...my first and favorite fighter.”

Would you believe he signed it “Craig ‘Too Tall’ Thorson, Lt Col, USAF.” Damned near all of us would like to be signing without the (Ret.) and be able to jump in a Viper once and a while. It really pangs (nostalgia-wise) when the Taco F-16s thunder over my head while I enjoy golf three days per week on the Kirtland AFB course!

The last two claims intended for this issue were sent in prior to publication of Issue Six by **Joseph E. Haines** as noted in the SYC Department of that issue. Here are the claims and our comments. (The supporting story for the one claim we allowed can be found in the *Odds and Ends Department* on page 27.)

Joe’s first claim was a legitimate SYC having to do with a **successful backseat dead-stick landing** he made at the Goodyear airport, south of Luke, back in ’63. It turned out that he may have achieved that distinction AFTER General Sweeny declared there would be no more F-100 dead-stick landings, period. That, of course, led to the replacement of Simulated Flameout Landings (SFOs) with the dreaded Precautionary Landing Pattern (PLP), which happened to look pretty much like an SFO!

Joe has only logged one of this rather rare landing type, but it’s a good start for a new SYC category. Surely there are more who have one also (if so, please speak up)—but can we push the envelope and find a guy with two...or even a third? Remember, we eventually did find a guy with three Hun Caterpillar Club qualification opportunities, i.e., **Rezk “Mo” Mohamad!**

Joe’s other SYC entry was disallowed because at present it does not meet our ever-evolving category criteria; but it’ll make a great story for another issue. Meanwhile, keep your golf shoe spikes sharp and your red BS flags clean. More SYC to come, come November. ☺



Departures

The following Hun Drivers, associates, or honorees have truly “slipped the surly bonds of Earth” and departed the final approach fix en-route to their last PCS and permanent resting places. They will not be forgotten. Our sincere condolences to their families and close friends.

Victor H. Wirta (lately advised)
January 22, 2007

Ralph C. Taylor
January 26, 2008

Richard “Dick” Roussell
May 3, 2008

John E. Malone, Jr.
May 28, 2008

Walter J. “Bud” Bacon
June 2, 2008

Robert N. Johnston
June 3, 2008

Please provide departure information to the SSS leadership or *The Intake* staff as soon as it is known. We’ll do our best to honor our fallen comrades in a timely and professional manner.

“Do You Remember” by Harv Damschen

Being the hunter (Hun) instead of the hunted (A-7D).

Where the supersonic log was located.

BAM, BAM, BAM! And feeling your feet being blown off the rudder pedals.

FYI — Important Development !!!

SSS Member Jack “Suitcase” Simpson’s SH article titled *A Proud Man’s Tale*, first published in *Flight Journal*, is now available as a PDF file under Aux Equipment – Books/Pubs on the SSS web site. A must read! Ed.

“... ‘prequel tales’ ...”

Three Taps on the Shoulder

By Ralph Taylor (RIP)

In the email that Ralph wrote to send us his well received story entitled, “Dead-stick in the Dirt” (published in Issue Four), he closed with this statement:

“An aside: After I plowed the Arizona desert (May ’60), I had no personal fear of flying. But I was very concerned about the welfare of my wonderful wife and three great children (at the time). I decided that I might not be a husband and father for very long with the “luck” that I had encountered strapping on that stick of dynamite, and there had been at least three previous warning taps on my shoulder, too!

“So I spoke to the 4th TFW commander (a B/G) and he said that he knew where I was coming from, and that fighter jocks would be reluctant to admit those thoughts, but that he himself had entertained similar thoughts on occasion. He said that he would write a letter of recommendation for my removal from flying status at the convenience of the Government with no bias or stigma. He did just that, and I enjoyed a rather fabulous career for almost 29 years total without recriminations of any sort.”

Shortly after Ralph’s story appeared in The Intake, Ralph replied to an Editor’s “thank you” email to him thusly:

“In your last email, you invited more stories. Here are ‘prequel’ tales about the three taps on the shoulder that began to tell me that flying that great stick of dynamite was more fun than you can have sitting down, but for some of us it was not conducive to a long life. As you know, the clinching fourth tap was that night ride in the Arizona desert in May of ’60.”

We had selected Ralph’s prequel stories for Issue Seven and started working on them before Issue Six was published (it’s nice to get ahead of the power curve in this business), when word came that he had died. His passing happened shortly after I had left him a voicemail telling him of the selection of his trio of stories and raising some questions about a few of the details. It was too late to get the answers from him, but I promised his wife Jo we’d do our best and for sure they’d still run as scheduled. She liked that. So here’s our best shot, cleaving pretty close to Ralph’s original versions which were in the form of letters: two to an elderly German friend of the family and one to Wally Mason. Thanks, Ralph. Ed.

Firm Tap #1 This Tap occurred just 10 months after arriving at Hahn AB in Germany in January ’57 to check out in the F-100C...not a good experience for a newbie!

I was flying wing on a live scramble (guns armed), and just before I broke ground, I felt the right tire blow. I had to go all the way to the ADIZ (Air Defense Identification Zone) separating East and West Germany for a “No-Contact.” By the time we returned for landing, they had the fire trucks, ambulance and of course the chaplain all lined up and waiting for me to clobber. Just a short time before, a jock at Bitburg AB had landed a Hun with a blown tire and lost it off the runway, wiping out the gear and bending the plane pretty good.

Of course, lead landed first in the event I closed the runway. I made one of the most careful landings I had ever made. As I flared, I tilted the bird so as to touch down first on the good left gear and held it there as long as I had airspeed. When the blown tire touched, I jumped on the brakes with the Antiskid turned off and deliberately



Ralph had a short but enjoyable go at a Hun career. He was assigned for 32 months with the 461st FDS at Hahn and 5 months with the 333rd TFS/4th TFW at Seymour Johnson. After three previous taps on his shoulder by Fate (the Hunter) and then his hairy “Dead-stick in the Dirt” adventure, he voluntarily gave up the cockpit and retired in ’82 with almost 29 years of service.



The offending right tire created the very black spot just above the wheel where the hot rubber was beating on a part of the gear door assembly.

blew the other tire. With equal resistance from both wheels, I rolled right down the centerline of the runway.

As I was rolling, I knew if I stopped on the runway it would be closed for quite a while, so I just taxied off the runway to a stop. As it was, they still had to close the runway to sweep the rubber that I spread all over it.



Left main gear looked about like the right one.

I had thought of the technique of holding the blown tire off and intentionally blowing the good tire while contemplating my situation before we RTB'd (since it was a "lesson learned" from post mortems of the earlier similar incident at Bitburg). As you can see, I scratched up the concrete pretty good, but the left and right wheels were pretty equally ground down. I don't think my wheels could be repaired. :-)

Even Firmer Tap #2 This incident occurred on a high altitude gunnery mission at Wheelus AB, Libya, circa 1959.



Gentle Ralph painted this sign to take to Wheelus and torque off the TAC Fighter jocks, since the "Deadly Jesters" were still a "day squadron" not converted to that one-way flight deep into the bad guys country.

Note the banner target and gun sight reticle.

The night before, there was a big party at the Officer's Club (which usually means, let's all get drunk as a skunk). I elected to remain in my high-class tent with

plywood sides and a couple of windows, and write a letter to Jo or read a book (I continue to refrain from any alcoholic beverages and the use of profanity). I was awakened by the drunks returning some time after midnight, whereupon, they decided to have another party right there.

The next morning we suited up for a gunnery sortie. I was in a flight with three hung-over drunks who had difficulty climbing the boarding ladder to breathe 100% oxygen in an attempt to return their brains to something like normal!

I had made a couple of passes with no problems. On the third pass I was slightly out of position (which is not that unusual), so I honked back on the stick to catch up with the banner. I was still lagging so I added a few more G's (to about 7 or 8) and I blacked out (which again is not unusual at altitude and high G's). I released the stick slightly and my vision did not return...I was blind as a bat! I instinctively went through the motions of rolling out of my turn while pulling up to avoid the weighted banner. I was helpless.

The other members of the flight said that I started to babble about where I was, my attitude and what I was doing, and telling everyone else what to do to avoid a mid-air (and they said that the strange part was that most of it made sense), but I have no memory of what occurred. One of the wingmen recalled me saying that I was reducing throttle for a descent. I could just as easily have rolled over to an inverted position and pulled back on the stick, performing a Split S maneuver, but that may have resulted in a dive straight into the Mediterranean.

My vision slowly returned. The first thing I saw on the altimeter was 12,500 feet, and I was in level flight. At about the same time, a flight member spotted me, joined, and we proceeded back to the base. Of course I had to loiter while the other three birds landed. While waiting to land, the squadron flight surgeon came on the radio and administered some silly tests to verify that I was capable of landing. I had to go through the same routine with the fire trucks, medics and chaplain lining up for a crash.

My landing was perfect. It had to be with the audience that I had! When I taxied to my parking spot, there was an ambulance waiting to rush me to the hospital for a battery of tests. The flight surgeon was waiting and insisted on personally taking a blood sample from me as the first order of business.

In a few minutes a medic walked up and told me that with my blood alcohol level I should be unconscious. After a few more frantic moments they determined that the Doc had used alcohol to swab my arm and had injected the stuff into my vein. The medic drew another blood sample, and it was normal. (The flight surgeon had attended the party too!!)

Maintenance determined that my oxygen regulator had failed with no warning, which put me up the proverbial creek without a paddle. Instead of me sucking

the 100% oxygen that I had selected, I was getting only pressurized air, so I had hypoxia of the worst kind.

It was ironic that this happened to me, because, in my annual altitude chamber flights, I always volunteered to remove my oxygen mask and “practice” hypoxia to demo its effects to others. Prior to mask removal you were given a board with pegs inserted with the round end down and you were told to remove each peg, reverse the ends and place the pegs in the board with square holes. After the mask was removed, I recalled doing a few properly, but then I didn't really care and started throwing pegs all over the place prior to losing vision and consciousness. The chamber crew immediately reattached my mask, but I remembered the warning sensations very well—except at 30,000 feet in a fur-ball with a tow ship and a banner!

(And like the later encounter with the Arizona desert, this miss-adventure could have been fatal.)

A Gentler/Sucker Tap #3 This tale stems from an exchange of war stories with Wally and a question about the cover photo on Issue Two which showed a Myrtle Beach Hun taking to the air. (*At the 2007 Reunion, Jack Sanders claimed to me that he was the pilot! Ed.*) Wally wanted to know if I had ever been there. My answer:

I arrived at Seymour in January '60. I only passed over Myrtle Beach once and was too busy to see much of what was on the ground. They were closing the runway at Seymour for maintenance and our “go to” destination was Brookley at Mobile, AL. Sixteen of us took off and made a low pass over Myrtle Beach as a diamond of diamonds, but since I was flying slot behind the squadron commander (and they often are the worst at leading such a gaggle!), I was very busy!

We then climbed to about Angels 30 and loosened up a bit. While still at altitude, lead told us to close it up as we approached Mobile (don't ask me why!!) Lead began to descend and soon we were going too fast to be in so close. Someone keyed their mike and said, “How about speed brakes?” Lead uttered a selected word or two and then called, “Speed brakes...now!”

For a moment, I thought the world had drastically slowed, and I went screaming ahead at warp speed. I will never know how I passed lead without hitting him, since I had my bird up to where I had a good burble on the VS, but somehow I did.



This is the last photograph Ralph sent. He said, “This is a photo of the expression I probably had when Lead called ‘Speed brakes...now!’ and I took the lead in a flash. It was the last tap until the big one at Willy.”

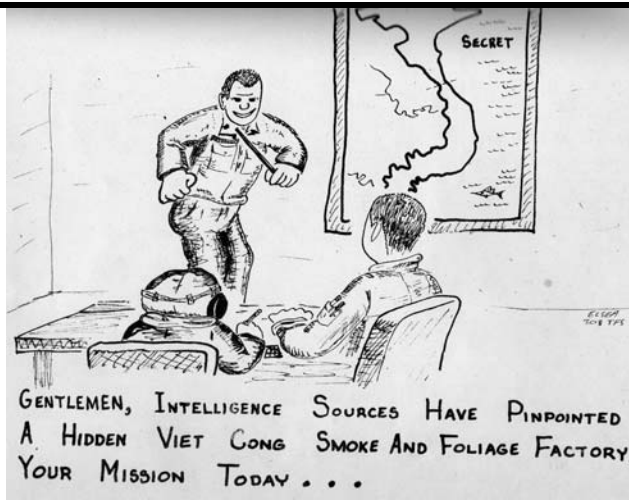
The next thing I knew, I was **WAY** out front of the gaggle, and I took time to check my gauges. I cranked that hydraulic selector knob CW to the stop and saw that my hydraulic pressure was on ZERO. Of course lead came on with a couple more selected words and asked me in a loud and higher pitched voice, “Can't you hear?” I very calmly told him that I had lost hydraulic pressure. He said, “Oh Poop!” or something like that! :-)

The remaining flight members did a 15 ship flyby over Brookley and Mobile while I loitered. During that time the tower marshaled the entire disaster team...meat wagon, fire trucks, writers, photographers, looky-loos and of course the ever-lovin' chaplain.

I never again nursed brakes like I did that day. I used only one application and had just enough pressure to turn off the active without nose gear steering. ☹

So ends Ralph's contributions to The Intake. I wish he had sent more...for the Story Bin. He will be missed! Ed.

On a lighter note, here's some Vietnam Era humor by George Elsea from his published cartoon series called “A Tuy Hoa Ace.”



“Them were the days.”

‘58 TDY Aviano Adventures

By Alan “Lad” Duaine

Again, “Lad” (from Lawrence A. Duaine) entertains us with some “war story” vignettes from Chapter 10 of his unpublished work to be called “Cold Warrior.” Previous chapters appeared as stories in *The Intake Issue Three* (The Day My Real Life Began) and *Issue Five* (Double Dead-Sticks at Rivolto). If you haven’t enjoyed them, you can check them out on the SSS web site under the link labeled “The Intake Journal” where archived copies of all issues are now accessible using the current SSS password (if you don’t have it, contact the Editor). Meanwhile here are the first three of eight short vignettes, the other five of which will conclude this chapter in *Issue Eight*, come November. Ed.

Instrument Flying Fun with Degraded Systems

Aviano was where I won my spurs and gained flying confidence that sometimes became cockiness—so at home on instruments that I enjoyed weather flying...even sought it out. This adventure came about on a ferry flight back to Aviano from Hahn. Into an overcast at barely a hundred feet, my pitot-static system iced up on takeoff, the same situation I’d had at Ft. Campbell, Kentucky, the previous winter when it had occurred in clear weather and in a formation flight. Gone were airspeed, vertical velocity, and altitude information. The difference was that now, I was alone, in the soup on partial instruments, and no place to go but Italy. I couldn’t get back in to Hahn in those conditions, and on that Sunday, every other base in Germany was socked in, as well.

Unhappily, I began converting my instrument technique to pure attitude and power setting references. My first big decision was when to come out of afterburner. Without the reassuring airspeed indicator, the loss of thrust and sinking sensation made for an unusually queasy experience. Fighting the urge to pull back on the stick, the bleak terrain so close below felt terribly important.



Lad enjoyed flying weather, but not with complete pitot-static system failure and no wingman! (Photo: Michael Benolkin)

Deliberately, I nailed the attitude gyro at a constant, conservative pitch. All the way to northwest Italy, around

Switzerland, through the Rhone River valley and around Mont Blanc, I stared at my remaining friends in the assembly before me. Sinister in their absence as the craven defectors were, my loyal power and attitude instruments stood resolute, but even my radio compass had gone sick on me. For constant tuning, my only reward was a faint whimper at Dijon—the identification barely readable, the bearing indicator needle perambulating aimlessly as an ant from a drowned nest. On dead reckoning time and distance alone, I made the turn at Torino, and finally began to emerge from the upper clouds between there and Treviso. Off to my left, I could see the Alps rising above a solid lower deck well below. I’d had no contact with anyone since leaving Hahn Tower frequency in Germany. No one spoke to me in France, and so far, I’d had no luck in Italy either. As time ran out for my estimate at Aviano, I worried that my radio was going, too. Although I was now in the clear on top, and that helped after an hour and thirty minutes in the soup, I needed ideas.

Halfheartedly, I called Aviano Operations. Instantly, Lew Shattuck answered me loud and clear. I don’t know how, but in just over ten minutes, he came blasting out of the murk, low at ten o’clock, still in burner—a sterling display of skills acquired during his tenure in the Air Defense Command. In yeoman service I’ll never forget, he had come off the desk in Ops, roused maintenance, and scrambled to “on top.” I was on him like a hawk. As I joined up on his wing, he took me through a couple of rolls and suddenly, there were all my gauges, back on duty. (As we had let down into denser atmosphere at increased airspeed, my pitot-static system had thawed out.) But that little exercise in suspense and speculation



In Riyadh during Ramadan, 2002, “Lad” wrapped up damn near 50 years in the cockpit. “My final landing there ended ten years of corporate flying out of Paris Le Bourget and 23 years with Braniff International, but none of that flying ever matched my first twelve Air Force years in Superhogs, Huns, and Thuds.”

had given me the last endorsement my psyche needed to call myself a real fighter jock.

Fun on Instruments, “The Prequel” (Degraded Pilot) Shortly before the above icing incident, there had been another honing experience. When we weren't sitting on alert, we were allowed out on a few cross-country flights. Two indelible impressions remain of my first such flight, one a glowing inspiration, the other a dark terror, but in its way, no less an inspiration.

On the first leg out of Aviano, we climbed west to Torino and beyond. Leaving the Maritime Alps, we passed south of Mont Blanc. It wore a mantilla of snow. On this brilliant day I looked across the formation at two shiny F-100s, trailing crystalline vapor across the face of the mountain. The bright duralumin aircraft winkled above its broad bosom, leaving garlands lying lightly across the lofty brow. Lacking a camera, I seared that image in memory, where, only slightly faded, it yet remains.

Later, over our destination airfield in Kent, England, letting down into night weather, there it was again, my old bugaboo, VER-TI-GO! Reeling, I groped my way onto final for a ground-controlled radar approach under the direction of an RAF controller. As I eased lower to the initial approach altitude on the downwind leg, he gave me the standard litany, one required to establish the format of the approach to come. Cold apprehension moved up my spine—it was as though he was reading the sentences. With my heart a hot, throbbing apple climbing out of my collar, my molars tasted like vinegar. Twice I depressed the mike button to ask him to take me around the pattern—anything to delay the moment when I would have to start down into that awful pit. But the stern warnings of the fuel gauge stopped me.



The Royal Air Force GCA controller wasn't this cute, but he sure saved Lad's butt that night!

He continued, "...your landing gear should be down and checked...."

Sucking in a huge gasp of oxygen, I flung the gear handle down. As I had feared, the mechanical action and noise only aggravated my dizziness. I wanted to scream aloud, but I made it to the glide path, the electronic stairway to earth. He wanted me to come down, but on the lip of the top step, I tripped headlong. My airspeed was rising...frantically, I yanked the throttle back.

"You are dropping slightly below the glide path, come right now, zero three four degrees."

Hopelessly, I searched for the heading, everything else but my spinning head forgotten.

"You are still below the glide path...further right now, zero three six degrees, please..."

His voice was now icily deliberate.

"You are now well below the glide path for some reason..."

The power was winding down to idle. Furiously, I jammed it to the stop. I screamed into my oxygen mask, a terrified shriek—

"Duaine, you're going to bust your ass! Get with it!"

It was hopeless. For an awful second, I wanted to eject, but out of the night, that steady voice held me. His words hardly mattered; it was the voice of a proctor - tones with burnt edges. There it was; there was nothing else he could do for me. In *rigor extremis*, I did manage to lock the throttle at the right constant power setting. Somehow, I corralled my sink rate at 700 feet per minute, but the war of the senses continued—I was still madly rocking the wings. Out of the dark, he pressed me on to my task.

"Now come left, left, zero, three, four degrees..."

A wisp of light, another smearsy wink, tantalizing promises. I wanted to plant my feet, to lean a shoulder against something solid, but there was only the voice.

"...approaching centerline from the right...slightly high on the glide path...you are approaching minimums ...on centerline..."

Then, he was telling me to take over visually and land. Even rolling down the runway, it was all I could do to keep between the lighted lines. I hit the mike, but at first, all that came out was a couple of pants...just before I turned off the runway, I did manage to humbly thank the voice in the night.

"Rhajah," was all that he said.

That was not the last time I had vertigo, but it was the all-time worst. Never again did I suffer that terror, because I must have exhausted my ration of that particular torment. Never again did I wag the throttle back and forth like a pump handle, or swipe the stick like a broom. On my internal ledger, boldly stamped for all time, was the legend—**VERTIGO GRADUATE**.

Behavior Deserving of The Penalty Box Almost every single week at Aviano brought some experience that

now hangs like an old calendar in the attic, a marker denoting some advance in maturity, a chit redeemed in survival. In the abandon of our enthusiasm, it was sometimes necessary to reign in on a few tending to run away with the bit. Sometimes this adjustment was self-administered, as in the case of an unfortunate young man who augured into a steep upslope upon which he blundered during an alpine canyon reconnoiter. Or, it might come as a disciplinary slap for exceptional stupidity, as it did in my case.

Lew Shattuck jumped into the back seat of an 'F that needed a test hop after an engine change. I was going to fly, while Lew would log the extensive readings on the test card. As dusk settled on Christmas Eve of 1958, we were in a hurry; there was a great party pending. Our data complete, we turned back for Aviano at nearly 40,000 feet, still in afterburner after the last check. In lightning inspiration, I solved the riddle of advancing party time and extreme altitude surfeit with a brilliant thought -

"Lew! Let's say 'Merry Christmas' to the guys at the club."

"You're flying it," was all he said, but he was chuckling.

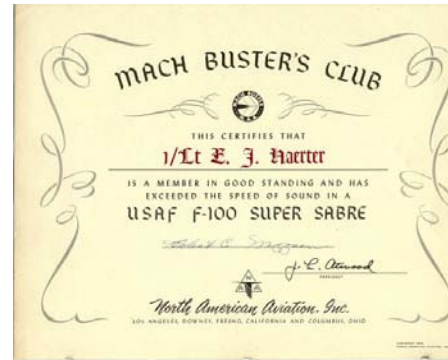
Still in 'burner, I rolled into a very steep dive, headed directly at the base. As we achieved the quite creditable velocity of 1.35 mach, I began a six and a half G pullout that ended at 11,000 feet. From that point, at idle power with the speed brake out, we dropped quickly into an overhead pattern, landing less than two minutes later. Before I could get the canopy raised, an operations staff car slid to a halt down by the nose gear. As soon as the boarding ladder hooked over the canopy rail next to my shoulder, it began vibrating to the exertions of our squadron executive officer. We were the only Air Force squadron I ever heard of that had an "executive officer," but anyway, I only had time to open my oxygen mask and cut the engine before I was staring into the very red face of Major 'Red' Evans, of the usually jovial mien. In most unsocial tones, he informed me of his findings:

"Lad, before you tell any goddamn lies, I want you to know that you were the only one airborne. What in the hell were you thinking about up there?"

"Well, sir," I grinned weakly, "it seemed like a great idea at the time."

Four days later, I emerged into daylight from the "Hole." The aptly named Hole was the dismal inner sanctum of the Top Secret Control Center for our local operations. I had been assigned to sit solitary guard duty over the safe, to maintain communication with our upper

command in Germany, and to contemplate the iniquity of my ways for the entire holiday weekend, plus.



There was no certified glory PAPER like Ed Haerter's OFFICIAL-LOOKING CERTIFICATE (above) for Lad's mach-busting achievement that Christmas Eve day at Aviano.

During that penalty box time, I was at leisure to contemplate the time our CO, Major Donald N. Stanfield, had fingered me to sit in for him as squadron commander-for-the-morning, to mete out justice to an erring airman. (The kid was AWOL as hell and no mistake, so I nailed him good. Stanfield laughed and called me a hard-ass.)

Thinking further on that recollection, the mystery of "Executive Officer" Evans stood clear—why it was he, not Stanfield, who greeted me on that ladder. I remembered Stanfield standing at the foot of the ladder as Lew and I crawled out of the airplane. There Stanfield stood in his "silver tans," blonde hair slicked back under that jaunty overseas cap, hands jammed in his pockets in that slight hunched pose he liked. His telltale smile and dimples said he was not entirely unsympathetic, but ball-busting Evans got me good. That was his main job, I could see now.

I realized then, that yeah, Stanfield never had any but uplifting messages for the troops. In Stanfield's world, Evans, or someone else, got the shit details of life on the downside.

Early on the day of my parole from the Hole, I ran into squadron mate Keith Phillips at breakfast.

"Goddamn, Lad, that was the best boom I ever heard. I had just hit the top step in front of the club when it hit. I've never heard a FOUR-banger before. It went BAM! POOM! pa-BAM! I jumped three feet high!"

His enthusiasm and appreciative commentary did somewhat ease the sting of my recent penalty box incarceration. ☺

These days, Keith Phillips would have concluded his remark about the FOUR-Banger with "Sierra Hotel." Stay tuned for Lad's concluding five vignettes that close out his '58 TDY Aviano Adventures in the Fall/November issue of The Intake. Ed.

“This day would haunt number Five forever.”

Too Late... Too Late

By Jack Doub

PROLOGUE Perhaps no incident in the storied history of the F-100 has evoked more errors in the telling than the tragic incident most of us have only heard about as a tape recording in ground school. Known usually as the “Too Late, Too Late” tape, the recording is real...I was on the ground that fateful day at Nouasseur Air Base in Morocco. This is the true story...or at least as factually as we can piece it together in the present.

Back in 1959, the 615th Tactical Fighter Squadron, the Black Panthers, was based at England AFB, Louisiana, when the deployment order came to reposition to Myrtle Beach AFB. From there they were to commence the long over-water flight in three separate daily launches, consisting of eight, four and six birds, to Nouasseur Air Base, Morocco. After crew rest at the huge SAC base near Casablanca, they were to proceed to Greece for a short exercise before bedding down at Aviano, Italy, for their assigned TDY.

The weather was beautiful that April day as the six-ship last flight went through its pre-dawn launch and proceeded east through serene skies above the puffy clouds dotting the ocean below. Coco Red flight was led by the squadron ops officer, with the squadron maintenance officer also in the flight.

The only FNG (F-ing New Guy) was number Four, an eager young first lieutenant with a somewhat spotty record in the squadron. As luck would have it, number Five in the flight was an old head—a Korean War vet with over 2,000 hours in jet fighters.

The flight was relatively routine as the Black Panthers cruised toward their first refueling just to the east of Bermuda. Everyone took on gas and the flight pressed on toward its second refueling over the Azores. One monotonous hour followed another as the flight endured that most famous of aerial axioms: “Hours and hours of sheer boredom...”

The first sign of trouble was benign enough. Following the second

refueling, number Four fell back from the formation a bit.

(In tactical formation, we’re often accustomed to varying flight positions for wingman as they try to save fuel by making small power adjustments, then waiting to see what it gives them. We can even maintain formation with gentle climbs and dives...gaining and losing small amounts of airspeed to stay in relative position.)

That’s what number Five assumed as he watched Four slipping back. Except this time, Four didn’t catch up! Five made no comment, waiting like a good wingman for Lead to notice and react.

Finally, Lead did notice and transmitted, “Bring it up a little, Four.”

Four didn’t answer, but slowly, though raggedly, he began to regain his normal position. He seemed a bit jerky about it, a fact not lost on Five, who knew Four usually was pretty smooth when he was in formation.

The briefing had stressed that anyone with aircraft trouble should let Lead know early. But Four remained silent. As his erratic flying continued, Lead finally asked, “Coco Red 4, how you doing?”

“Having trouble with my heat.”

“Four, you got runaway heat?” asked Lead.

“My cabin heat control seems to be inop,” Four replied.

The squadron maintenance officer then chimed in, reciting the procedures for controlling runaway heat.

“I’ve tried everything!” said Four.

“Can you open your ram air?” asked the maintenance officer, aware



Charter member Jack is also a contributing editor of The Intake. He flew 3 Tours in Vietnam, including 102 missions with Misty. He is attributed with more combat missions in SEA than any other F-100 Pilot (572).

that this would get cool air into the cockpit.

“Negative...but I’m OK,” he said.

“Do you want to turn back to Lajes?” Lead asked, referring to the air force base in the Azores Islands.

“Negative!” came the somewhat emphatic reply, “I’ll make it.”

This fateful decision would come back to haunt Coco Red Flight. With a thousand miles to go and a cockpit temp possibly as high as 400 degrees, it was a lot to ask of the young lieutenant. But they did have a few things going for them. For one thing, the last leg was relatively short...short enough so that Four could drop down if that became necessary.

At one point Four complained that his oxygen appeared low. A routine oxygen check revealed they all had about the same oxygen level. The maintenance officer explained that the needle indicating the number of liters wobbles and drops almost to

zero with each breath and then returns to normal.

Satisfied, number Four silently pressed on.

But quite soon his flying became more erratic. He began to drop back and down. Lead made a comment or two, finally instructing number Five to stay with Four while the rest of the flight pressed on into Nouasseur.

At this point they were only about 200 miles from Nouasseur and a huge 12,200-foot runway. But, ominously, huge thunderstorms were building along the Moroccan coast, and tragedy began to close in on the two silver fighters as they droned on to the east, falling far behind the rest of their flight.

Five was indeed an old head. He was deputy Lead and a senior pilot with 51 fighter missions in Korea. With his experience and assertive manner, he could save Four if anyone could.

As Four's flying became even more and more erratic, it was only Five's calm, reassuring voice on the radio that kept him from losing flight control. It soon became apparent to Five that Four's life hung on the thin thread of that radio link between the two of them. With Five encouraging him, Four seemed to settle down and flew on Five's wing. But, shortly thereafter, he began descending, slowly falling away from his leader.

"Four! Four! How you feeling, Four?" Five asked urgently.

"Hot...I'm a little hot. Woozy, but I'm OK."

"Pull the ventilator hose out of your poopy suit, Four. That'll cool you off a bit."

"Uh, rog, Lead. I pulled the hose."

As agonizing minutes ticked off, the two Huns sped toward the African coast at nine miles a minute, but it still seemed to Five that it was taking forever. They were now down to 10,000 feet, and had plenty of gas to make it to Nouasseur.

Finally the Ground Control Intercept (GCI) station at Nouasseur

picked them up—two birds showing as a single blip within the 60-mile range of GCI's scope. Five requested vectors because he was too busy herding his now-erratic wingman to navigate the last few minutes of the flight. After Four's continuing-erratic flying almost caused a mid-air, Five told Four to hold his heading, and he slid back to fly on Four's wing.

Four kept dropping lower and lower in his haste to land. Then he dropped his gear and popped his speed brakes! As Five rolled, skidded, and used his speed brakes to stay with him, he pleaded with Four to retract his gear and boards, "Get your gear up, Four, raise 'em up now! And also, get your speedbrakes closed...we're getting too slow. Four, clean it up!"

Altitude had become a major concern as Four let it drift down to 500 feet on several occasions. The scariest moment came when Four began descending with gear down, then re-extended his speedbrakes, getting down to 50 feet above the water before Five's urgent pleas got through to the obviously debilitated pilot, who began climbing again. The situation was becoming ominous.

Once back at 1,500 feet, Five pleaded with Four to take out his dingy stabber and cut open his poopy suit to cool him off. Four would not—or could not—comply. Five also made repeated attempts to get Four to jettison his canopy. To no avail.

(Interestingly, Four had been in this predicament once before. Back at England AFB, he had a cockpit go full hot while en-route to the gunnery range. On that occasion, his Leader instructed him to return to base and land immediately. Instead, he flew around for about 30 minutes burning off fuel before landing, despite the hot cockpit. Upon landing they discovered his leg was burned and he was forced to go DNIF while it healed.)

But in spite of the wise voice of experience, Four continued to resist every attempt to get him to jettison his canopy.

Things seemed to settle down for a bit when Five talked Four back up to 5,000 feet. His flying, while still rough, seemed OK enough to make the remaining 30-40 miles of the flight.

Then Five again called GCI, "Nouasseur, what's your weather? Looks like the thunderstorms are pretty solid up ahead."

"Roger, I have a nearly solid line of thunderstorms," replied the GCI operator. "Take up a heading of one-zero-five, and I will vector you between the bumpers."

"Roger, Coco Red Five flight. Break., break. You feeling better, Four?...Okay, here we go...stay right with me...straight to Nouasseur...and GCI, this is a Mayday! *This is a Mayday!*"

"Roger, we understand. The entire emergency response team is standing by already. Now squawk Mayday, please."

"Roger, squawking Mayday," replied Five. Then he saw Four begin descending! "No, Four! Get up here with me, Four!"

"Forty-five miles out, heading is one-zero-five, Coco Red," said GCI.

"Roger, 45 out. Four, we're almost there...get up here with me...looking good...just stay with me, Four...just stay with me. Can you hear me, Four, we're almost there...now let's climb...we're down to fifteen hundred feet, Four, let's get it up. Get it up, Four! Don't be rough, boy, settle down...pull it up, Four...Don't be so rough, Four, don't get so rough!"

"Heading is now one-zero-three, forty miles," GCI interjected.

Five's voice rose to a pleading pitch: "Pull it up, Four. Pull it up, boy... you're doing fine now. Come up now. Get your speed brakes up. Come up now with those speed brakes. Pull it up on my left. Only 39 miles. Get your speed brakes up, Four. Brakes up!"

"That a boy." There was relief in his voice as he saw Four retract his speed brakes and accelerated to a point not quite so near the stall.

“...Doing fine, doing fine.”

“Heading one-zero-five, only 37 miles to go,” said GCI.

“Heading looks good, Four.... Good job...pull her up...doing a good job. Attaboy, pull her up.”

Five pleaded with Four and kept giving him a steady stream of encouragement and minor heading changes.

“Coco Red, you’re passing the coast now,” advised GCI.

“Negative, GCI. We’re still over water. What’s the latest heading? I’ve got a man in real trouble here.”

Even before GCI could reply, Five watched, startled, as the canopy blew off Four’s aircraft. “Good” thought Five, “*That might help.*”

Then GCI offered, “Steer zero-nine-five, runway is now 28 miles. We are one thousand feet scattered and five thousand overcast.”

“Roger that, and mark this spot,” said Five, “Four just blew his canopy.”

“Almost there, Four, I’ll get on your wing now. Hold what you’ve got. Four, watch me!”

“Coco Red, the active runway will be one seven,” the cool voice of the GCI operator intoned.

“Roger, I copy runway one seven...back off the power a bit there, Four. Back off the power a little. Back off on it, Four... pull it up! Pull it up. *Easy!*”

Five was startled now as Four pulled back sharply on the stick almost hitting him.

“Easy, Four...easy...” And then, “Pull up, Four! Pull up!”

As the flight struggled on, Four’s flying became more and more erratic, climbing and diving roughly as Five pleaded with him to settle down. He didn’t seem to be hearing any of Five’s calls.

When Five asked how he felt, Four replied a muffled, “Negative.”

“What?” asked Five.

“Negative, negative,” slurring his words, Four answered harshly.

“Fifteen miles,” advised GCI.

By now the clearly overheated pilot was down to 1,000 feet and flying even more erratically. It was beginning to look to Five that he might not make it and he seriously doubted Four’s ability to safely land the airplane. He began to think ejection might be the best course of action.

On the other hand, Five could see that with the cooling effect of the wind with the canopy gone, his flying would smooth out for a few seconds, then he’d start wobbling erratically again. It was a crapshoot at best. Now that they were over land he began to lean strongly toward ejection as their best choice.

Suddenly, Four’s gear popped out and he began descending.

“Four, you’ve got your gear down. Get your gear up! Pull up, pull up... pull it up and get that gear up!”

Four continued on a steady course, but was descending slowly, and porpoising slightly as he over-controlled the aircraft.

“What’s our heading, GCI?”

“One-zero-five.”

“Come to the left, Four. *Come to the left!*” Desperation crept into Five’s voice at this point.

“Pull her around to the left, Four and pull her up!”

...Nothing.

“Okay, Four, pull her up and bail out! Pull her up. Pull up! Four, listen, pull up. Pull up and bail out. Let’s pull up and bail out now, Four. Get out of that thing!”

“Only 12 miles to go,” GCI cut in, “12 miles.”

“How many? Twelve? Pull up. Get that gear up. Four, pull up and go around in that thing! Four, pull up! Pull up...and bail out of that thing!”

But Four did not pull up. With his gear down he descended toward the desert, power on, as if determined to land in the desert, airport or no airport...he was landing! He had complained earlier that he couldn’t see the runway, now he seemed intent on just landing.

The overtaxed pilot set up a fairly passable touchdown in the desert, but the F-100 bounced, rose back into the air, then struck a clump of cactus and disintegrated.

As pieces rained across the desert, Five transmitted, “Too late...too late...too late.”

CGI finally broke the silence, “Mark your pigeons, one hundred-ten degrees, 10 miles.”

They had made it to within 10 miles!

“Roger,” Five then transmitted rather hoarsely, “That’s where he is.”

EPILOGUE

It took the emergency response teams two and a half hours to reach the crash site. Four’s lifeless body was still hot inside the heavy rubber anti-exposure suit. Investigation revealed extreme dehydration to be the cause of death. The doctors doubted he could’ve survived even had he ejected. Once the water content of the human body becomes dangerously low, the brain is seriously affected and survival is unlikely. That day would haunt number Five forever.

There is plenty of Monday morning quarterbacking and second guessing to go around in this sad tale: the poop suit is dehydrating in itself, the decision not to land back at Lajes is still debated, and perhaps blowing the canopy much earlier could’ve saved the young pilot. Then there’s the fact that he was the squadron’s most “gung ho” officer. And in that capacity, he had the cockpit and canopy area literally stuffed with squadron gear (patches, scarves, etc.) and the pilot fund’s considerable cash reserves. Could all that “stuff” explain his reluctance to blow the canopy and save himself while he still could have?

We’ll never know. ☹



Rare canopy-less Hun photo. Could Four have made it if he'd popped the canopy earlier?

Photo Essay — Cold War News Flash from Hahn Air Base

General Landon Visits Base, Flies in 50th Bird

Gen. Truman H Landon, newly named USAFE commander-in-chief-to-be, paid a two hour, first visit to Hahn on Wednesday morning. The general, who was greeted when he stepped out of his C-131 by the 50th Wing Commander, Col. Jack S. Jenkins, and his staff, and by 496th Commander, Lt. Col. Robert Dow, had a busy schedule lined up for him.

Included in this was preparation for a flight in one of the Wing's F-100s which was flown by Capt. Thomas Swalm. Swalm had traveled to Wiesbaden the night before and accompanied the General on his plane, briefing him as to what was in store.

The highlight was to be a 45 minute flight that would include a bomb run over Suippes range and breaking the sound barrier so that the General would qualify for the Wing's Mach Buster pin.

Minutes after his arrival, accompanied by Col. Jenkins, Gen. Landon inspected the crew chiefs and pilots on the flight line. In addition, he saw the Wing's select crew chiefs, select crew pilots, the Chief of Maintenance, and the 10th and 81st Squadron Commanders.

Departing the flight line, the official party went to the Victor Alert area, the munitions area, combat operations, and to the 10th Tactical Fighter Squadron area.

After his tour of the facilities, he was escorted back to the flight line where Col. Jenkins, in front of the F-100F #815, presented the USAFE commander-to-be with the 50th Select Crew award and the Wing plaque.

Then, climbing into the back seat of the bird, the General began the 45 minute flight to "Spang" which was, according to his aide, Capt. William White, the highpoint of the day's events.

Base Newspaper account of Hahn's welcome to General Landon back in late spring of 1961. Ed.

Tom Swalm sent in a base newspaper clipping of this event and the following photos (which we have annotated) that he recently found, which herewith memorialize a bit of Hahn Cold War history. Thanks, Tom. Ed.



General Landon was graduated from West Point in 1928 and won his wings in 1930. En-route via B-17s to the Philippines, he landed his echelon at Hickam Field during the Japanese attack on Hawaii.

By war's end, he was the Commander of the 7th Bomber Command in the Central Pacific. By 1947 when the Army Air Corps became the USAF, he was the 92nd senior officer and so was given a new serial number of 92 A.

Having never flown in a fighter, the General was "raring to go" with Tom for a Hun ride. Returning to the flight line after his Hahn facilities tour, he suits up under Tom's supervision before Colonel Jenkins' farewell presentations



Although briefed en-route from HQ USAFE to Hahn, the General wanted to go over the paperwork one more time. Seems like in pilot training they used to say "when the weight of the paperwork equals the weight of the plane, then you're cleared to take off!"



Colonel Jenkins presents the 50th Wing plaque to General Landon.



Then the Select Crew Award brings smiles, and it's time to kick the tires, light the fire, blow, and go!



After a "standard" 300' low level to Suippes Range in France, an over the shoulder bomb toss (120' at 6), some acrobatics, and a supersonic run to earn that pre-presented Mach Buster pin, General Landon's Hahn tour ends with a perfectly greased landing at Spangdahlem.

Nice work, Tom! Ed.



"It will be a happy hour to end all happy hours!"

Thus so did Ron Standerfer put it in the December, 2006, Issue Two of this journal where he previewed our first ever reunion scheduled for the following April. **And was he ever right!** See the Summer 2007 journal's After Action Report to savor the flavor of that historic event and whet your appetite for a reprise at the same hell-raising place in Las Vegas set for March 31 – April 2, 2009.

If you don't have a copy of the reunion report issue, you can view it at the SSS website under the link that says "The Intake Journal." The password for the archived copies is the same as for the membership list. If you don't know it, ask one of the Functional Contacts found on Page 31.

The 2009 reunion drill will be about the same as 2007, but enhanced somewhat. For instance, the Red Flag/Nellis Tour will include lunch at the O'Club and will be offered on both April 1 and 2. That will double the tour capacity to 200, so sign up early to guarantee yourself a slot. Golf will upgrade to posh *Highland Falls Golf Course* with a cushy 19th hole, as we understand it. Check it out at www.golfsummerlin.com.

The Reunion Registration Form showing all scheduled events and fees is now available on the SSS website under the "Reunion" link at www.supersabresociety.com. Check it out for a complete run-down and for planning purposes, even if you want to wait a while to register. For those without internet capability, a full-up copy of the form will be in the Fall/November 2008 issue of *The Intake* to copy and send in with your fees check. Note: the deadline for signing up for the Red Flag/Nellis Tour is February 1, 2009.

The F-86 Sabre Pilots reunion overlaps a couple of days with ours and they chose to use our venue. That will provide folks who are members of both organizations a great opportunity to double up on "reunionizing refashioning"—and happy hour activities.

Let The Good Times Roll!

“Palm trees offered great climbing challenges to inebriated fighter pilots.”

Wheelus Air Base Tiger Town Remembered

By Don Delauter

While browsing through some old pictures recently, I came across several from Wheelus Air Base, Libya. They go back to 1958-60 and my first operational assignment, which was the 8th TFS of the 49th TFW. Those were the days when our illustrious SSS President, Bill Gorton, was one of my squadron mates. Also in the group was intrepid F-100 pilot Bill McCollum and his vintage white Jag roadster. No doubt many SSS members spent some time in “Tiger Town,” then home of the USAFE Weapons Center.

At that time, U.S.-Libya relations were quite good. Idris the First (and last) was King of Libya. (Muammar al-Gaddafi did not enter the picture until 1969, when he led the overthrow of Idris and demanded that Wheelus be closed.) In the meantime, Tiger Town was the heart of fighter pilot country for USAFE’s Super Sabre units.

Tiger Town featured open bay barracks for our quarters, with GI bunk beds. The latrine and shower facilities were up a shallow slope toward the perimeter road, which ran along the Mediterranean Sea coast. Several tennis courts were just to the east of my hootch (a term not yet in use), and I spent some fun time with Bob Craner, another squadron mate and later Misty/POW, knocking the fuzzy ball back and forth.



Welcome to Tiger Town – Wheelus Air Base, circa 1960.

There was also a small bar in the area for those who didn’t have time or inclination to go across the base to the main club. The proximity of Tiger Town to the beach on the Med made for some relaxing off-time. I preferred snorkling with my spear gun, although soaking up the sun was good, too.

In 1958, there were three F-100D wings stationed in France. My wing, the 49th was at Etain, the 48th at Chaumont, and the 50th at Toul Rosiers. The 20th wing, the fourth F-100 fighter bomber wing in Europe, was at Weathersfield, England. A single Fighter Day unit, the 36th Wing, was flying F-100Cs out of Bitburg, Germany. In due course, they also would pick up an air-to-ground mission, much to their chagrin. There was a single F-100 squadron at Soesterberg, The Netherlands (where much later I would

have the great privilege and pleasure to fly the F-15 Eagle). On any given day, pilots from most of these units could be found in Tiger Town.

In late 1959, the France-based wings were “invited” by de Gaul to leave the country. The 48th went off to Lakenheath, the 49th moved to Spangdahlem and the 50th moved to Hahn. I personally hated to leave France, but the nuclear mission was much more easily accommodated from Germany.

The flight line at Wheelus was a short hop from Tiger Town in a blue step van. Most of the time the north ramp at Wheelus strained under the weight of dozens of Super Sabres. Their unpainted aluminum skin, with multicolored vertical stabilizers, soaked up the North African sun. Desert sand carried by frequent hot sirocco winds penetrated all available nooks, crannies and crevices. The whine of J57s could be heard almost constantly on the ramp, and the traffic pattern was usually full of departing and returning Huns (except during Friday prayers).



Don first flew the Hun A at Nellis in '57 and last flew the D at Luke in '70-'71. In between he flew in the 8th TFS at Etain and Spang '58-'60, at Luke '61-'64, and Phan Rang '68-'69 in 614th TFS (Lucky Devils). He has 2100 hours in the Super Sabre



Wheelus Flight Line — 8th TFS Yellow Tails

My squadron’s airplanes initially had yellow tails with black lightning bolts (see photo on next page). The 49th Wing was typical of a three-squadron wing, with each squadron having its own color. The 7th Squadron had blue tails and the 9th Squadron had red. All vertical stabs would become tricolored after the “communist” maintenance system called 66-1 was implemented, I think in 1959.

A few F-101s and later some Navy F-4s occasionally showed up on the Wheelus ramp. The F-4 struck us as unusual-looking, to say the least. I recall “Pappy” Liles remarking that the F-4, with its wing tips bent up, horizontal stabs bent down, and nose drooping earthward, looked like a class 26 just sitting on the ramp. (Pappy, a MIG-killing Sabre pilot in the Korean War, had lots of interesting quips. For example, he often needled us young jocks by saying that he had more time on the pickle button than we had in the airplane.)



Fleet was “old” and “new” model F-100Ds – 8th TFS.

The D model Hun fleet was a mix of “old” and “new” planes. The first D’s out of North American’s Columbus plant had main landing gear doors that were hinged close together so that a centerline station was not available. This meant that the nukes we loaded for alert and the big blue training shapes were carried on an intermediate wing station. The Mk-7 was the designated weapon for this configuration, and in the 49th, we loaded it at left intermediate. The later block D-models had their main gear doors configured so that a centerline pylon could be mounted between the doors. This could accommodate the new Mk-28 variable-yield nuke. This made possible a symmetrical configuration and an extra fuel tank, both of which were most welcome features.

But the training was the same. My wing used the over-the-shoulder LABS delivery almost exclusively, though we occasionally practiced the low angle toss delivery. Conventional ordnance delivery was not practiced. The 20MM guns were not harmonized and seldom fired. I think I fired the cannon a couple of times during my tour for “familiarization.” But we were in the Cold War, and nuke delivery was the name of the game.

The bombing range was El Uotia, located well southwest of the base. After take-off, we typically turned out over the Med and headed west over the water. We held north of the range until cleared in. The range was a typical nuke practice layout with a long lead-in line and several cross marks that could be used for IPs. It was not unusual to see a camel or two plodding along the lead-in line,

“Standard” El Uotia mission briefs for new heads (recalling my ’64 – ’67 TDYs from Woodbridge) included instructions in case you became lost in the vast and endless desert southwest of Tripoli: “Fly north till you come to the Med, then turn away from your pencils and follow the coast home.” Ed.

offering inviting buzz targets. The range target itself was a series of concentric circles measured in hundreds of feet from the bullseye, reflecting the fact that “close” was probably good enough for a nuclear weapon.

Typically, we used small practice bombs with a spotting charge to mark the point of impact. (This little fellow is familiar to anyone who ever practiced air-to-ground delivery.) However, I recall occasionally carrying a big blue blivit, the Mk-7 shape, over the top and into the immelman turn. We didn’t release the shape, but carried it home through pitch-out and landing. Fortunately we had learned a little bit about adverse yaw and the importance of using rudder.

Bomb scores varied with the range winds, i.e., the higher the winds, the greater the CEA. But again, how close did you need to be with a one-megaton bomb? Or, what is close enough for government work in this case?

The single J-57 in the Hun was a tough engine. We used to say that it would rather run than quit, so why would we need two? Engine failure, though rare, did happen. I recall squadron mate Bobby House returning to base with a rough engine in (I think) aircraft 52-756. He was landing to the west, and flamed out on final. He managed to get the aircraft inside the perimeter fence, but not before collecting some palm branches in the main gear fairing and horizontal stab. But damage was minimal under the circumstances.

The main club at Wheelus was a short drive in a rented VW Bug over on the side of the base nearer the gate to Tripoli. I don’t recall that the club was especially plush, but do remember the patio, with its many palm trees. In fact, the trees offered great climbing challenges to inebriated fighter pilots.

This behavior caused the club management to feel so much chagrin that they went so far as to complain frequently to the then 17th AF Commander, General Spicer. And while I did not personally witness this incident, I heard from “reliable sources” that on one particular occasion, when a couple of fighter jocks were having a contest to see which one could reach the tree-mounted lights first, he (General Spicer himself) was reported to have responded to the complaining club manager, in effect, “Never mind, I’m betting on that one,” pointing to the lead.

Huge quantities of JP-4 were consumed by F-100 units while they were making tiny little holes in the vast and seemingly endless Libyan desert, focusing a great deal of their flying training on tactics that prepared them for a conflict that fortunately never materialized. How ironic that when the live shooting for these Hun drivers did start, it was not Mk-28s, but iron bombs, napalm and 20 mike-mike that they delivered in great quantities.

Still, I, for one, look back with nostalgia at the time spent at Tiger Town, where I really learned to fly and love the Super Sabre. ☺

“I was sure ‘supervisory error’ was going to enter the conversation shortly...”

No-Fault Gear Up Landing

By Don Nichols



A prolific and welcome author, Don is a charter SSS member. He flew the Hun stateside and in Europe. He was also an IP at Luke in the early 1960s.

I was in the 50th TFW at Hahn AB in 1961, and when the East Germans caused some problems with traffic into West Berlin, we started sitting alert with AIM-9s. But with no mapping radar, we were strictly daytime capable, and were on tap from 30 minutes before sunup until 30 minutes after sunset in Berlin.

In the winter, when it got dark around 1630 or so, someone got the bright idea of launching us about 30 minutes before sunset. We had to file a 175 and stand by for a scramble. If anything happened, we would be airborne, and if nothing did, then we just went ahead and got two hours of night time. This helped the wing meet its flying time quota (hard to do at Hahn), and if one of the planes broke, they had all night to fix it and get it back on alert the next morning. Just what we needed! I must have gotten 30-40 hours of night time in 6 months.

One night, I was leading a four-ship alert scramble. As we were taxiing out, I got a flight control failure light and had to abort. Hot damn, I get to go home early tonight! I turned the flight over to #3 and went back to the squadron. When I walked in, they wanted to know what the deal was, and I told them. "Great," they said. "Your flight has night mobile, and you are the only one still here!" Lucky me. If there was anything we hated worse than mobile, it was night mobile in that cold little box.

After sitting out there for about 2+30, my flight started to return. We had about 400 to 500 feet and one mile in fog, and I heard the first bird check in with GCA, come down final, and land. Then came #2, also under GCA control, who landed with no problem. We (the F-102 pilot who was also out there with me) never heard anything from #3, and all of a sudden he popped out of the soup with his landing lights on and landed. We later found out that GCA got him too close to #2, so they put him on a different channel. Thus, we heard nothing.

The F-102 troop commented that there were sparks as he landed, and I said, "Yeah, that's his tail skid." To which

he replied, "You must have one hell of a big tail skid on that bird."

I turned to look, and sure as hell, he had landed on his 275s with his gear up. Landing on the tanks wouldn't have been too bad, other than grinding down the tanks, but just as the aircraft stopped, the pilot (a little excited) blew the canopy. It went up and came down right on the tail! Of course, there was an accident investigation board. The following is a true account of what transpired.

INVESTIGATOR: What flight is this pilot assigned to in the 10th TFS?

ME: "C" flight, I responded.

INVESTIGATOR: Who is his flight commander?

ME: I am.

INVESTIGATOR: Who was leading the flight on alert?

ME: I was.

INVESTIGATOR: Who signed the 175 for this flight?

ME: I did.

INVESTIGATOR: Did you conduct a preflight briefing for the anticipated flight?

ME: I sure did. (I was hoping he would ask me if I briefed him to lower his gear before landing, and I was going to give him the wise ass answer that I didn't brief him to raise the gear after T.O., but no such luck.)

INVESTIGATOR: Who was on mobile control at the time of the accident?

ME: I was.

Later, listening to GCA's tape of the flight, the pilot did report "gear down," so we don't know what went wrong. I think he must have put the gear down, thus the call, but I guess for some reason he raised it on final.

I was sure "supervisory error" was going to enter the conversation shortly, but for some reason it never did. The wing commander was sitting in on this interview, and I explained to him that the F-100 was the only aircraft that I had flown that didn't have the landing lights tied into the gear system (no gear down, no landing lights). And at night, with those lights in the eyes of the mobile control troop, one couldn't see if the gear was down or not.

FINAL RESOLUTION: No supervisory error and they did away with night mobile!!! From then on, we did put a pilot up in the nice warm tower where he could monitor the radios and give assistance if needed, but that sure beat mobile. Out of crap, good things sometimes happen. ☺

“... [structural] failure can happen at loads much lower than ultimate static strength.”

Bomb Burst

By Merrill A. “Tony” McPeak

Fear and fright are two different things, the emotion of true fear requiring time for culture and preferably a period of helpless activity...Fear is the afterbirth of reason and calculation.

Fright is only the percussion cap of fear. It snaps rather than rumbles and its explosion is instantaneous...It hits, explodes, and may be gone as quickly, if it does not have time to ignite the keg of fear.

—Ernest K. Gann, *Fate Is the Hunter*

Del Rio could be the movie set of a West Texas border town. It’s windy here. The weather tends to extremes in winter and summer. The base, located six miles east of town, is named for 1st Lt Jack Thomas Laughlin, a B-17 pilot and Del Rio native killed over Java within a few weeks of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Land is cheap, so the base spreads over an extensive acreage. It’s fairly level ground—desert sage, scrub brush, elevation 1,082 feet. It’s a pilot training base, like the one I went to at Enid, Oklahoma. Our Team flies in on 20 October 1967, for an air show the next day, honoring 60 or so graduating lieutenants.

We go through the standard pre-show routine. Lead and Five survey the show line. The rest of us make the usual round of hospital and school visits, or do radio and print-media interviews. We pick up rental cars and head to a motel off base. At dinner, Lead cracks the same jokes about each of us, and the audience chuckles while we pretend the lines are not so stale. Next day, proud parents watch as new pilots pin on wings.

We brief at noon in the flight safety conference room at base operations. As usual, an “inspection team” comprised of local dignitaries joins us for a photo session before we step to the jets. The film “Bandolero!” is in production at a location near the base. It stars Jimmy Stewart and Raquel Welch, who show up in the Inspection Team and catch the crowd’s attention. Jimmy Stewart is a Reserve Brigadier General, a founder of the Air Force Association, a big



From December 1966 to December 1968, McPeak flew the NAA F-100 Super Sabre in almost 200 USAF Thunderbirds performances as solo and lead solo pilot.

hero to all of us. Raquel Welch is—well, she’s Raquel Welch.

Engine start is at 1410. We’re wearing white show suits for this one. Lead can choose from among gray, blue, black or white—my least favorite. We look like Good Humor Men. In addition, I work hard during the demonstration and sweat wets my collar circumference. This wouldn’t matter much, except we do a lot of taxiing in trail, often with canopies open. With only six feet between the end of my pitot boom and Bobby Beckel’s afterburner eyelids, I take a lot of engine exhaust into the cockpit. Wearing the mask and using 100 percent oxygen keeps me comfortable, but soot clings to show suit dampness,

leaving a very noticeable “ring around the collar” when I wear white. At Del Rio, I follow my usual practice and roll the collar under, once we’ve taxied away from the crowd. After the show, as we deplane, I’ll roll it back out again, the chimney black still there, but now underneath, out of sight.

We taxi short of the runway for a “quick check,” a couple of our NCOs doing a walk around inspection, checking everything they can see. They examine my aircraft—F-100D, serial number 55-3520, good-old Number Six—and clear it for flight. We take the runway—the Diamond in fingertip, Bobby and me in element, 500 feet back.

The Diamond releases brakes at precisely 1430. Bobby and I run up engines, my stomach tightening against the surge of isolation and exhilaration that comes before every air show takeoff. Weather is clear and 25, temperature 73, wind 140 at 12, gusting 17.

By this time in the season, the Team is really clicking. Already we have 91 official air shows under our belt. Maybe this year we’re not quite going to set a single-season record, but we’ve flown a lot of shows, we know what we’re doing.

Today is a super day, the show line a nice long runway with uncluttered approaches, the sky a severe clear. Maybe the wind isn’t perfect. We would like about 5 knots, please, just enough to blow smoke off the show line and not so much as to require adjustment in the maneuvers or make the air lumpy.

Twenty-one minutes into the show, it's going nicely, has a good cadence and rhythm. The script is on automatic, the most important information packed into silences between radio calls. We approach the climax of the demonstration, the signature Bomb Burst. By now I'm very experienced at putting on pigtails; I can judge the timing pretty well and get the rolls truly vertical. I'm doing lots of rolls, getting closer to Bobby's claimed all-time record 13 (yah, right). My Crew Chief, C.D. James, keeps count. If I can get even close to 13, he'll make sure we get the credit.

Doing even a few vertical rolls requires establishing a perfect vertical up line; doing more than a few means you must, in addition, begin the rolls with a ton of airspeed. I grab for altitude while Beckel entertains the crowd with his Wing Walk. I want to put at least 17,000 feet in the bank—more if I can get it. But I'm out in front of the audience, lagging the Diamond, and don't want to be noticed until I pop through their smoke. I sort of tiptoe up to altitude using military power. The Narrator helps by drawing the crowd's attention to the Diamond as it dives into the entry for the Bomb Burst.

At what I judge to be just the right moment, I hurry after them, roughly following their track over the ground, keeping their smoke between me and the crowd. Airspeed builds rapidly. One thing I have to be mindful of is the rule that you don't go supersonic during an air show. The Thunderbirds transitioned to the F-100 in 1956, making us the world's first supersonic flying team. The next year, however, the FAA got even by banning any public demonstrations or shows involving supersonic flight. So, no booming the crowd. I want to stay subsonic, but just barely—say, 0.99 Mach. Approaching the pull, I light the burner and activate the smoke switch, holding airspeed just at the edge of the Mach. At the bottom of the entry, I start up into the vertical. We don't have a solo pilot handbook,

but, if we did, it would say this is a 6 1/2-g pull.

The biggest mistake I can make? Arriving early. With the Diamond about to break in all four directions, if I misjudge and get there too soon, I've nowhere to go. (In a pinch, I'll call the break rather than wait for Lead to do it.) If I get it right, I'll hit the apex of the Bomb Burst five seconds after the Diamond separates, snap the throttle out of burner so as to make smoke, be perfectly vertical, and be going very fast.

As the Diamond pilots track away from one another to the four compass points, I'll put on those lazy, lovely pigtails, after which I better get the smoke off and figure out how to do a slow speed vertical recovery. Nominally, I should stop rolling at 150 knots indicated in order to have at least a little control authority with which to point the nose. Just recently, though, as my confidence has blossomed, I've begun staying in the maneuver and squeezing the last ounce of roll out of the airplane, a practice that makes for some very interesting recoveries. Oh, well—no guts, no glory.

But this one does not turn out right. On the afternoon of 21 October 1967, at Del Rio, Texas, I start an aggressive pull into the vertical—and the airplane explodes!

F-100 pilots are accustomed to loud noises. Even in the best of circumstances, the afterburner can bang pretty hard when it lights off. Engine compressor stall is fairly common, usually moderate and of short duration, but sometimes quite severe. Any F-100 pilot who hears a really loud "BANG!" automatically thinks "compressor stall" and unloads the jet to get air traveling down the intake as smoothly as possible. So, instinctively, I relax stick pressure to unload the airplane. By now I'm fully into one of those mental fast-forward exercises where seasons compress into seconds, the leaves changing color while I watch. I move the stick forward lethargically—even have time to think, "*That's no compressor stall.*"



Thunderbirds' signature Bomb Burst.
What they were planning for...but was not to be that day.

In retrospect, the airplane has already unloaded itself, making my home remedy superfluous, but some ancient pilot lore is at work here: no matter what else happens, fly the airplane. Forget all that stuff about lift and drag and thrust and gravity, just fly the damn airplane until impact—then fly the pieces as deep into the wreckage as possible. Old 55-3520 has quit flying, but I haven't—not just yet.

But it doesn't matter much now because flames fill the cockpit. No decision to make—I have to get out. Grabbing the seat handles, I tug them up, jettisoning the canopy and exposing ejection triggers under each armrest. I yank the triggers, immediately feeling the seat catapult into the slipstream. Seat separation occurs automatically and too fast to track, explosive squibs firing to unlock the seat belt and shoulder harness. The seat disappears. I quickly curl into a semifetal posture that will absorb opening shock. Jump school helps here; I congratulate myself on perfect body position. For one elongated moment, I imagine how proud they'd be at Fort Benning.

Then the chute snaps open much too quickly, jolting me back to real time and short-circuiting the transition from stark terror to giddy elation, the

evil Siamese twins of any parachute jumping. My helmet is missing. Now, where did that go? Looking up, I see a couple of panels torn loose, several shroud lines broken, and one large rip in the crown of the parachute's canopy. I'll come down a bit quicker than necessary. Not much altitude anyway. Going to land in the infield, pretty close to show center. Have to figure out the wind and collapse the chute fast so it won't drag me. Heck—I'm on the ground and it's dragging me already. Get the &#%#@ damn chute collapsed. OK. I sort of stand up. Maybe I'm in one piece. Here comes a blue van with some of our guys in it.

It begins to sink in. In 14 years and more than 1,000 air shows, the Team has been clever enough to do all of its metal bending in training—out of sight. This is our first accident in front of a crowd—and the honor is mine. Maybe I'll never get the record for vertical rolls. I gather up my gear and climb into the van just as the Diamond bottoms out, low and right on top of us. Give me a break. At least they don't have smoke on.

Somebody wants to take me immediately to the base hospital, but I say, "Let's go over and tell the ground crew I'm OK." So we stop, I get out of the van, shake hands with C.D., toss the other crew chiefs an insincere thumbs-up. Jimmy Stewart is still there and comes over to say nice things, but Raquel hasn't stayed for the show, so no air kiss.

I'd given Mike Miller some ad-libbing to do in the middle of his narration and he mentions maybe we should leave that thing, whatever it was, out of the show sequence. That's when I learn I've pulled the wings off the airplane.

* * * * *

On modern fighters, the wings are positioned well behind the pilot. You can see them in the rear view mirror or if you look back, but otherwise, they're not in normal view. Of course, I was watching the Diamond, ahead of and well above me, as I concentrated on getting up to



The USAF Thunderbirds flight demonstration team inadvertently uncovered a wing-structure flaw in the supersonic F-100D fighter fleet during a 1967 air show

them quickly, but not too quickly. I didn't see the wings come off. All I knew, the airplane blew up.

The F-100 has a large fuel tank in the fuselage, located behind the cockpit, forward of the engine and on top of the wing center section. When the wings folded, a large quantity of raw fuel from this tank dumped into the engine, which exploded. The shock wave propagated up the air intake and blew the nose off, removing the first six feet of the airplane, right back to the bulkhead forming the front of the cockpit pressure vessel. The explosion badly damaged the tail end of the jet, and also liberated the drag chute used for braking after landing. (As it came fluttering down, some spectators thought that my personal parachute had failed.)

After it exploded, the engine began pumping flame through the various cockpit pressurization lines. Conditioned air enters the cockpit at the pilot's feet and behind his head. My flying boots, ordinarily pretty shiny for an ROTC guy, were charred beyond repair; I never wore them again. Where I had rolled my collar underneath to protect show suit appearance, my neck got toasted.

I have no idea how fast I was going at ejection. I was certainly just barely subsonic when the wings failed, but with the nose blown off, the F-100 is a fairly blunt object and would have slowed quickly. On the other hand, I remained with the aircraft no more than a second or two

after it exploded—not much time to decelerate. When I came out of the jet, windblast caught my helmet, rotated it 90 degrees, and ripped it off my head. Someone found it on the ground, the visor down, oxygen mask hooked up, the chinstrap still fastened. There is also a nape strap at the back of the helmet that helps secure it to the pilot's head. As the windblast rotated my helmet, this strap rubbed the burned part of my neck, causing some bleeding.

The Team wears an Air Force standard backpack parachute suitable for ejection at either high or low altitude. Opening is automatic and will occur even if the pilot is rendered unconscious during ejection. At altitudes below 14,000 feet, the parachute begins to open one second after man-seat separation. This one-second delay lets the human body, a draggy design, slow down a little and also gets some separation from the seat, which is even draggier. For flight at very low altitude, the parachute can be made to deploy without delay. To set up this configuration, the pilot attaches a lanyard to the parachute's manual activation device—the "D" Ring. The lanyard is part of the ejection seat, so it pulls the parachute open as the seat falls away. Ordinarily, this option is selected only for takeoff and landing, when you are relatively slow, close to the ground and if you need the parachute, you need it now. Otherwise, you unhook the lanyard. At cruising speed, even at low altitude, the combination of your

flight path vector and the upward thrust of the seat as it rockets out of the aircraft will give you the altitude you need and it's a better trade to have the one-second deceleration before chute deployment starts.

However, the Team does so much work at low altitude; we just leave the lanyard hooked up for the air show. That explains why my chute opened so fast. Too fast, as it turns out. I didn't get enough separation from the seat and it somehow made contact with my parachute canopy after it deployed. The damage to my canopy was probably the result of entanglement with the seat, although some of it could have been caused by the shock of high-speed opening. The opening shock was certainly harsher than normal, and as my torso whipped around to align with the parachute risers, these heavy straps did further damage to the back of my neck, the body part apparently singled out for retribution.

Walking into the base hospital I'm pulled up short by my image in a full-length mirror. Above it is a sign that says: "Check Your Military Appearance." Mine looks like I've spent some time in a gunnysack with a mountain lion. The white show suit is a goner, the cockpit fire having given it a base coat of charcoal gray, to which had been added several tablespoons of blood and a final dressing of dirt, grass and sagebrush stain. I can account for the camouflage—caused by being dragged along the ground—but I hadn't realized my neck was bleeding quite so much.

"Bandolero!" turns into a slasher horror movie—The Solo Pilot from Hell. (Really good judgment to have stopped and visited with the ground crew, in my condition, eh!)

The doctors keep me in the hospital overnight. The Team visits. Miller smuggles in a milk carton, emptied and refilled with dry-martini substitute. They'll leave for Nellis the next morning. I tell the hospital staff I'm leaving too and ask Dickey to pack the stuff I've left at the motel. I

ride the C-130 with the ground crew, arrive at Nellis a few hours after the rest of the Team, and walk off the airplane. I'm sore for a couple of days, but we're about to take a break anyway. The 1967 show season is over.

* * * * *

The aircraft continued on a ballistic trajectory after I punched out, scattering parts and equipment along the extended flight path. Most of the engine and main fuselage section impacted about two miles down range from my initial pull-up. All the bits and pieces ended up on government soil.

There was no injury or property damage. The aircraft has a listed value of \$696,989, but if there's a good kind of accident, this is it. Nobody's hurt and all the scrap metal can be collected for post game analysis.



Unlike combat losses, Tony's canopy remains and all other debris were available for post-game analysis. Wing center box failure was identified as the culprit, and a fix was designed and implemented for the fleet.

* * * * *

The wings of the F-100 mate into a box at the center of the fuselage, the strongest part of the airplane—or so we believed. When what remains of my wing center box is inspected, it is found to have failed. North American Rockwell, the airplane manufacturer, tests parts of the center box on a bend-and-stretch machine and it fails again at a pressure rating that translates to a load of exactly 6 1/2 g's for my flight conditions when the wings departed. This should not have happened, since the F-100's positive load limit is 7.33. As it turned out, my wing center box broke along a fatigue crack—and

there were about 30 more such cracks in the vicinity of the one that failed.

* * * * *

The static strength of an aircraft is its ability to take a simple load, without consideration for repetition or cyclic variation. For instance, the F-100 is designed to encounter a limit load of plus 7.33 and minus 3.0 g's in routine operations. Of course, the aircraft will often experience positive loads below 7.33 and negative loads less than 3.0 g's, but these numbers represent the normally anticipated maximum loads. The aircraft must withstand such use with no ill effects. Specifically, the primary load-bearing structures of the aircraft should undergo no objectionable deformation when subjected to a limit load and should return to their original, unstressed shape upon removal of the load.

To provide for the (hopefully) rare and brief instances when the aircraft must endure a load that is greater than the limit to avert disaster, the manufacturer designs in a safety factor—usually an extra 50 percent. The primary structure of the aircraft must also withstand this so-called ultimate load—for the F-100, about 11 plus and 4.5 minus g's—without failure. Such a load will "overstress" the aircraft, perhaps even causing permanent metal deformation, but no actual failure of major load-carrying components should occur. During construction of a new design, ground static tests, including destructive tests, verify ultimate strength. If the aircraft experiences a load greater than the ultimate strength, structural failure is likely imminent.

In service, aircraft accumulate structural damage that, although related to static strength, falls more into the category of wear-and-tear. If repeatedly flexed over time, metals develop fatigue, usually in the form of minute cracks that can enlarge and propagate into the cross section of aircraft structures. When a crack progresses sufficiently, the remaining cross section can no longer withstand imposed stress, and a sudden, final



Circa-1967 Thunderbird pilots line up for a team photo. Tony McPeak is third from the right.

rupture occurs. For these reasons, failure can happen at loads much lower than ultimate static strength.

Interestingly, fatigue damage is cumulative. Just as all men will likely get prostate cancer if they live long enough, so will all aircraft structures fail at some point because of metal fatigue. This is why even the most ruggedly built airframes have a service life. It's also why the load-bearing structures of an aircraft are inspected regularly, to insure against the stored up effects of metal fatigue.

However, the wing center box of the F-100 was not regularly inspected. First of all, it's hard to get at; more important, it's over-engineered, at least in theory. That is, North American's designers projected the spectrum and frequency of loads that could be expected in service and primary structures other than the wing center box were engineered to sustain these loads through anticipated service life without fatigue failure.

Then the wing center box was made even stronger than that. It might

fail, but it wouldn't matter because other load bearing structures would fail first, in the same way that most men die of something else before they will ever die of prostate cancer.

* * * * *

It should not have happened, but my wing center box failed—well inside the normal operating limits of the aircraft—from accrued metal fatigue. When the Air Force looked into the matter, some other recent F-100 losses seemed suspiciously similar.

These were cases of aircraft lost while bombing jungle targets in Vietnam. The recovery from a dive bomb pass is a lot like the high speed, high-g pull-up into the Bomb Burst. In the Vietnam cases, the Air Force could not retrieve the pieces and wrote off the aircraft as combat losses.

After analysis of my wreckage, specialists examined other F-100s, finding a lot more fatigue damage. Consequently, the Air Force put a four-g limit on the F-100 and initiated a program to run all the jets back

through depot modification to beef up the wing center box.

As it turned out, my accident almost certainly saved lives by revealing a serious problem the Air Force could and did correct. But it also grounded the Team for the rest of the year.

A mod line, set up at Rockwell's Palmdale facility, would modify the fleet—our red, white, and blue jets first. With luck, we'll get them back by January to start training for the '68 season.

* * * * *

Gen. Merrill A. (Tony) McPeak flew F-100, F-104, F-4, F-111, F-15 and F-16 fighters, participated in nearly 200 air shows as a solo pilot for the Thunderbirds and flew 269 combat missions in Vietnam as an attack pilot and high-speed forward air controller (FAC). He commanded the Misty FACs, 20th Fighter Wing, Twelfth Air Force and Pacific Air Command, and completed his career as the 14th USAF Chief of Staff. ☺

Thanks to General McPeak for sharing this account of a memorable event from Hun history, some of which he is documenting in a literary work currently in progress. Thanks also to Mr. Bill Scott of McGraw-Hill's Contrails magazine for permission to use photos and the bio from a previously published and copyrighted version of the general's story. Ed.

A Valuable Hun History Lesson and an Interesting Stake Your Claim Category

By Joseph E. Haines

History Lesson Luke got the Hun in '58. Checkout involved flying with someone else in an F-model. On this particular day I was flying a transition flight with John Wilkes, who worked at Group, in an F-model that had come to us from Nellis and had just undergone an acceptance check. We did the air work and came back for touch and go's at Luke. We were on the go after the first landing when we got a "flight control system fail" light. I called mobile and told them we had the problem and would make a full stop. John said something about pitch so I took the aircraft, pushed the power up and started a left turn to downwind.

We were discussing the situation as we were going up to downwind. Everything seemed normal to me until I started to level off and bring the power back. I had no pitch control!! I said "John we have to get out." He said, "I'm ready," and I pulled the armrests up and squeezed the trigger. My chute opened, and one swing later I was on the ground. John didn't make it (RIP). (We had no zero lanyards back then.)

The investigation found one of the "Wiggins quick disconnects" was not connected on our good flight control system. These disconnects were located on each side of the fuselage: three on each side. On one side was #1 pressure, #2 pressure and utility pressure; and on the other side were returns on each system. They were designed to seal when disconnected so hydraulic fluid wouldn't spill when the aft section was pulled off. Our good system had the RAT but was not connected to the slab.

At that time, the flight control system check after start was simply to "stir" the stick, check for a pressure drop and then a build-up. This accident changed that check list item to: select #1, stick straight back, ailerons neutral, release the stick, check for pressure. Stick full right, release, check for pressure drop. Then forward and left with #2 selected. This ensured each system was powering each flight control. Just a little history about a needful lesson—learned the hard way.

Stake Your Claim In 1962, I had just finished three years at Wheelus when I was told to go back to Luke and teach some of you guys something about "adverse yaw." Oh those were the good ol' days!! I had the honor to fly in the F-model with student Bill Collett on his last syllabus mission before graduation. The low-level navigation route was up in northern Arizona, over Parker Dam and into the Gila Bend complex for an "over the shoulder" delivery. The navigation, target identification and weapon delivery were all right on (*send the check ASAP, Bill*). Pulling off the target, we got an "AC generator failure" light. But we circled, scored the bomb and started back to Luke.

There we were at 13,000 feet, about half way between Gila Bend and the Sierra Estrellas, when the ol' "F" starts a normal shut down!! Being the professional IP that I was, I think I said something like, "This bitch is quitting." And she did! Boy was it quiet!!! We headed direct to Luke at best glide speed, with me trying air starts from the back seat. Nothing happened. I had Bill try from the front seat. Same result. During his last try, we lost all electrical power and the canopy seal started to deflate. I thought I was on my way out! I pulled my mask up and yelled, "Don't eject." (Ok Collett, did you turn off the battery switch, instead of the air start switch?) I was talking to mobile all this time, and it was apparent we weren't going to make Luke. Being "professional" mobile controllers, they asked, "What are your intentions!"

Well, right there at three o'clock low was Goodyear airport. "We will try RW 2 at Goodyear" (all those SFOs I had shot there before were about to pay off). I told Bill we would commit to a high base, and if it didn't look good there, we would eject. That would put us over the Salt River which was nothing but desert. After the 180° for "low key," we were a little low, so we held the gear. I had dialed in Goodyear tower in the back radio but failed to realize that the control of the UHF went to the front seat with the loss of electrical power. At the 270° point it looked good. I called for the gear on final; Bill pulled the lanyard, three green, "bingo." We got the flaps in the flare and everything was normal from there. That ol' F performed just like the engine was running. After we stopped, I raised the canopy and there was not a soul in sight. Goodyear didn't get any of my calls, of course, so it took them awhile to get the welcome committee out. Gen. Sweeny had just ordered no more "dead-sticks" in the HUN!! I figured I was looking at a radar screen in northern Canada next, but that didn't happen. Ok Hun drivers, any other "**successful backseat dead-stick landings**" logged out there?



Bonus Historical Safety Cartoons

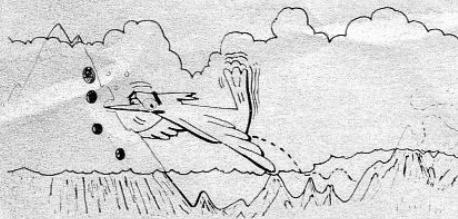
The safety cartoon artifact shown below on this page was given to us by an unknown SSS donor just as we were rushing out of the last April 2007 Reunion soirée at the Gold Coast Hotel and Casino in Vegas. Stan Hardison, creator of TAC Attack's beloved Fleagle, says he was familiar with the artist's work, but that these birds had no influence on his strip. We thought we'd give Lt. Kershner's strip a showing (even if it's Navy stuff), just to prove that we really do appreciate all member inputs for our journal, and that they all (at least most of them) rise to the top of our Story Ideas Folder...eventually!. So get out your magnifying glass (yes, I use one also) and enjoy some vintage naval aviation safety humor. Issue Six's WWII hero, Bruce Carr, "evading with a chicken around his neck," would have enjoyed this too! Ed.

BIRDS I HAVE KNOWN

ORIGINATOR of these cartoons is Ltjg. William Kershner, of VC-3's Operations Department. He has used his ability to draw, coupled with a

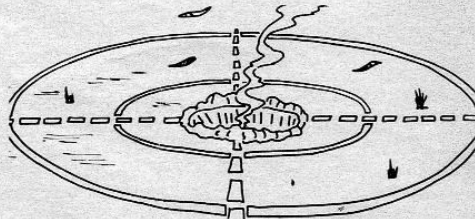
sense of humor, to make VC-3 pilots a little more safety conscious. Ideas were drawn from incidents reported in "Aviation Safety Bulletins."

West California Flatheaded Hillborer



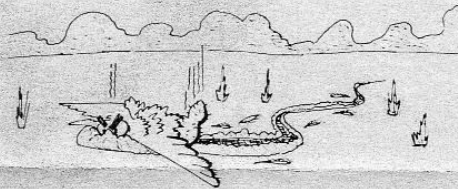
Normally seen on cloudy days, this bird is easily recognized by bright plumage and habit of leaving peck marks in various structures visited. Call—"HELLICANMAKEITVFR."

Potbellied Hornbilled Targetpicker



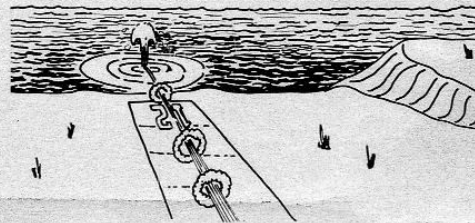
Or 'Browntipped Melebird.' Bird is hidden from view in pictures. Targetpicker makes its home in one precise movement, seldom makes second try. Dirt colored. Call—"BULLSEYE."

Absentminded Shovelbilled Sandpiper



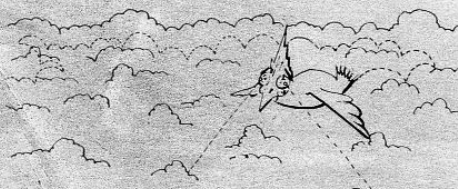
Easily recognized by mud colored plumage and lack of feathers near empennage. Leaves designs near perching site. Doesn't use legs during landings. Call—"WHONEEDSACHECKLIST."

Hardheaded Redtailed Roadrunner



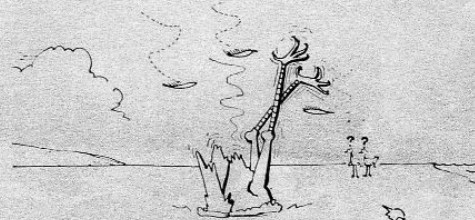
Or 'E HOTANHIGHUS'. Like Sandpiper, is noted for his odd manner of perching. Also ends up in salt pits, through hangars, outhouses, and odd places. Call—"WHOTHEHELLSFAST."

Yellow Bellied, Pinheaded Holeseeker



Usually found above an overcast. Recognized by haggard face and gray coloration. Flight usually erratic. Large bloodshot eyes. Call—"WHEREHELLSTHATLETDOWNPLATE#&*!!"

North American Looping Crane



Male of species is often seen doing intricate maneuvers at low altitudes. Seen above beaches, etc. Shown above shortly after series of maneuvers is terminated. Call—"SEEME WHOOPS!"

The Purge Door Incident

By Jack Hartmann

I started setting up the following prank during a student briefing at the Tucson ANG. We were running a schoolhouse for guard F-100s at the 162nd TFG in the early 1970s. On that day, I was briefing a four-ship gunnery mission to the controlled range at Gila Bend. The other IP was our part-timer ops officer (whose name shall remain anonymous). Let's call him "Bud." Lieutenant Colonel Bud didn't fly with students much; he mostly took care of paperwork. (Glad someone did!) All I did was get as many FTPs as I could (FTP stood for Flying Training Period: four hours and wheels in the well equaled one day's guard pay).

I was briefing some advanced strafe techniques, and Bud was paying rapt attention. "So, after you roll in, stand the throttle straight up, make two quick clicks of nose down trim, and ease the trigger to the first detent to open the gun purge door. Then..." "Wait a minute!" Bud interrupted. "How the hell am I gonna do that? I didn't even know there WAS a first detent!" "Ahh! See?" I smirked, "That's why I'm always winning quarters in strafe and you're not. In bumpy air the detent is really hard to 'feel,' but you can actually hear and feel the purge door opening. It's a neat way to 'take up the slack' in the trigger so there's no delay in the gun firing. Really, it works!" I suggested that he try listening for it the next time he went x-c and with practice, it would soon come naturally. (Ah ha...the hook was set!)

I knew that we were deploying to Navy North Island at San Diego on the upcoming drill weekend for our annual "water survival training." (What a boondoggle!)

Bud was leading the second flight of four and I made sure I was in his flight. (Back then, before travel pods, we used to put our x-c clothes in a hang-up bag and lay it in the gun bay door. It was a pain in the ass, as it took the crew chief and pilot to lift and latch the heavy door.)

So, there we were at FL290 heading for San Diego — and it was time!

"Tigre 21 this is 22. Come up ops freq," I called.

"This is 21. What's up 22?"

"Hey Bud, have you tried to hear the purge door open yet?" I radioed.

"Not yet, but here goes," he answered.

"Hey 22, it doesn't seem to work at all! I didn't hear anything at all."

"Ah...you...ah... gotta have the gun switch on to make it work," I countered. (*I had him!*)

All I really wanted to do was mess his clothes up a little with some ice and 400 knot air, but when the purge door did open, the system worked as designed, and the airflow purged the gun bay of most everything, including Bud's hang-up bag!

At first, only a small corner of the bag oozed out the small 5" by 12" hole. But that was followed quickly by the rest of his hang-up bag. The rapid ejection looked like a tube of toothpaste being squeezed. (Whoops! I'd overdone it!).

Before I could call him to get off the trigger, his bag shredded and departed the aircraft. After landing, all he found was a corner of his bag wrapped around his shoes. (Guess they couldn't squeeze thru the hole!)

Colonel Bud assumed it was just a vacuum that sucked his clothes out and issued a new rule: No more clothes in the gun bay doors. (I was off the hook!)

As a result of this incident, we designed travel pods out of some old napalm tanks. Sure enough, Bud insisted we put carts in the pylons so we could jettison them if we had to clean the wings.

Well, you guessed it! At a later date, when Bud was again on a x-c, he put his hand on the left console to adjust his position in the cockpit, and...BOOM! There went the travel pod via the aux release button. Wouldn't have been so bad, but that pod also contained our group commander's golf clubs!!! ☹



SSS charter member, Jack is a contributing editor of The Intake staff. With over 5,000 hours of single-seat fighter time, his favorite aircraft remains the F-100.

"The Tree" – A "Response" Poem

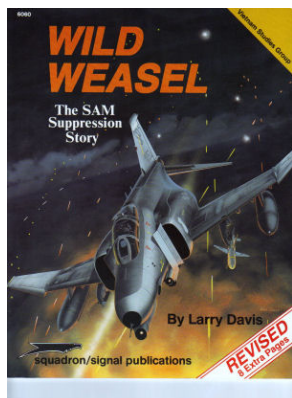
I swear to God I didn't see
The branches of
That F\$%&*@# tree
It jumped in front of me so quick
I had no time to pull the stick
A tree that simply had to wear
An F-one hundred in its hair

I know that there will never be
A rule that undeniably
States with such finality
With force and great velocity
"You may not strike mahogany
... only God can hit a tree"

Gary Ball, Phan Rang, Jan 1968
Mac Staples, Witness - (*It wasn't that tree's time.*)

Book Review Time

Wild Weasel: The SAM Suppression Story By Larry Davis. Squadron Signal Publications, 1993



They Walked on the Wild Side — Five Stars!

There is an old saying that admonishes, “Don’t tug on Superman’s cape.” That’s exactly what the Wild Weasel crews did on a daily basis during the prolonged air campaigns over North Vietnam between 1965 and 1972. Their mission was brutally simple: ferret out Surface-to-Air Missile (SAM) sites and destroy them. How they went about doing that is described in Larry Davis’ excellent and well-documented book, *Wild Weasels: The SAM Suppression Story*. This is not a weighty, encyclopedic tome jammed with technical details and mind numbing drawings and charts. Davis lays out the story in an orderly fashion, starting with a brief primer about the early days of radar, and ending with the role of Wild Weasel aircraft in the Persian Gulf War.

What I like best about the book are the pictures. There are tons of them, superbly prepared and enhanced photos of every aircraft model used for the mission, as well as photos of the crews at work and play. The book shows flashes of humor as well. For example, I did not know that Weasel training was conducted at the “Willie Weasel College,” nor had I ever seen a picture of the USAF’s first-ever stealth fighter (*on page 34 of Larry’s book*).

The Wild Weasel crews performed a tough, dangerous mission; a mission where heroism and superb airmanship was the expected norm. If you haven’t already done so, you owe it to yourself to get this book and relive their lives with them. Larry tells me you can get it online from Amazon or Barnes and Noble, or order it from most good book stores. — **Ron Standerfer**

Note: Larry Davis is the long-time Editor of *Sabre Jet Classics*, magazine of the F-86 Sabre Pilots Association.

\$25 Annual Dues for SSS Associate, Regular and Charter Members are due on or before January 1 of each year! If you haven’t paid for 2008 by now, you are “In Arrears One” and this will be your last copy of THE INTAKE till you get caught up and reinstated as a Member in Good Standing!

Contact the Treasurer, Lee Graves, ASAP (see contact data, page 31)

Super Sabre Society Store = Hot Deals

There are several items for sale on the SSS Web site under the link **Auxiliary Equipment**. As nice as they all are, some of those items bring no cash to the SSS. However, the items shown below (which are a sub-set of those on the Web site) DO bring some cash into the SSS coffers. So belly up and get a hat that’s Not Orange, and buy some other sew-on or stick-on items to help you celebrate being an SSS member. Sloan Brooks will process and deliver your order if you send a snail-mail letter with your selections and a check to “Auxiliary Equipment,” SSS, PO Box 500044, Austin, TX, 78750, or I’ll bet he’d even take an email order from you addressed to sloanb@swbell.net and send the goodies when he gets your check. Good stuff, good cause, good deal!

					
<u>Not an Orange Hat!</u> \$15	Small Patch (3.5”x3”) \$5	Large Patch (7.71”x9”) \$15	F-100 Patch (3.5 “) \$5	Stick-on Decal (2”) 2/\$5	Stick-on Decal (3”) 2/\$5

SSS & Intake Functional Contacts

General Topics: Les Frazier (Executive Director),
supersabresociety@suddenlink.net, (512) 930-3066.

Dues, Money Matters: Lee Graves (Treasurer),
hgraves@austin.rr.com, (512) 784-3943.

Membership/Contact Data: Pete Davitto, (Committeeman)
pdavitto@alltel.net, (706) 947-1636.

The Intake/All Matters: R. Medley Gatewood (Editor),
rgatewood@comcast.net, (505) 293-8396.

Call contacts for their snail mail address or mail your material to
Super Sabre Society, P.O. Box 3100, Georgetown TX 78627,

Note: The Intake – Journal of the Super Sabre Society is published three times per year. Mailings are planned for delivery (stateside) in late March, July, and November. If you don't see yours by the end of the next full month, contact the Editor. It might be a simple address problem, or you may be **In Arrears!**

Plan Ahead for Reunions

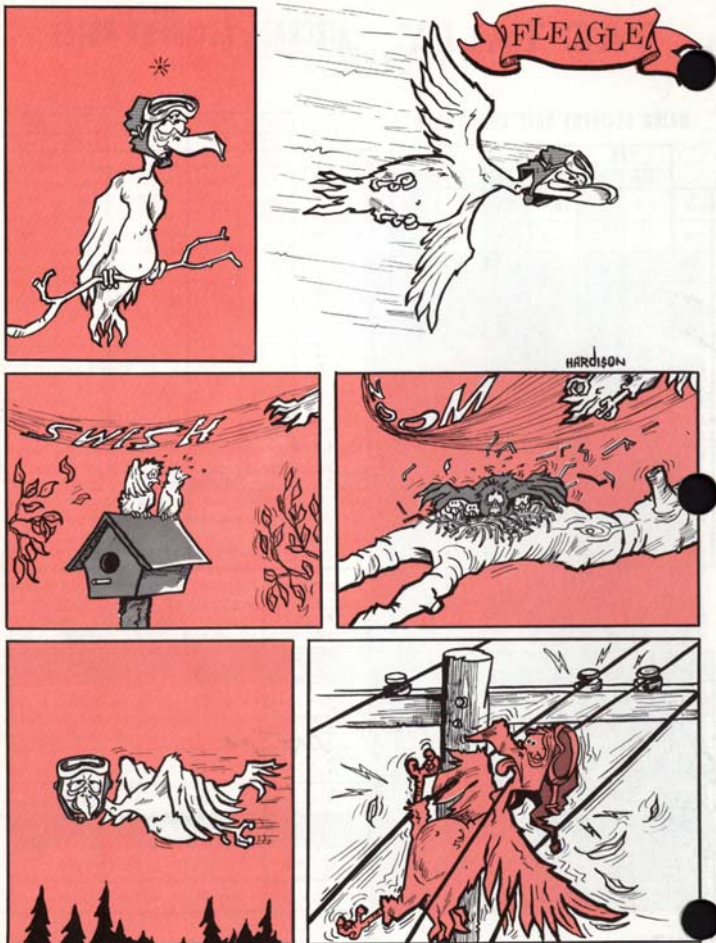
F-86 Sabre Pilots Association
March 29 – April 2, 2009

Super Sabre Society
March 31 – April 2, 2009

Both events will be at the
Gold Coast Hotel & Casino
Las Vegas, Nevada



Reservation forms to **COPY** and fill in will be in the fall issues of both the Sabre Jet Classics magazine and The Intake journal and are available now on at least the SSS web site. **Block your schedules NOW!** And Register ASAP!!!



TAC Attack – Third Fleagle Strip – Aug 1970

Return to those thrilling days of yesteryear with Fleagle! These pages of history are courtesy of the beloved Safety Strip's creator Stan Hardison and today's Air Combat Command. Read all about it at URL http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0JCA/is_7_12/ai_112090770.

(Black circles are punched binder holes in the archived copy.)

Back Cover Credits

This issue's back cover is a "signature" quality photo restoration by our Photo Editor Extraordinaire, Shaun Ryan. He tells me that means "it's as good as he can make it." If you could see the original USAF Official Photo, you'd agree he did a bang up job of it, so we've recently added it to our ever growing Hun Landmark Tour collection. This Hoover Dam treat was originally scheduled to grace the front cover to support Tony McPeak's T-bird tale, but when we later found Ken Chandler's work, it was a no-brainer to lead with Ken's fine art and sandwich Tony's great article between both covers with this historic photo.

Parting Shots on Your Personal Contact Data and Dues

Remember to check your personal data at the SSS Web site. Current password is "things on the ass end of the airplane that open up when you call for AB." If the password doesn't come to mind, or you don't have web access, give me a call at (505) 293-8396.

If something's wrong with your personal data, send the corrections to Pete Davitto. If you're **dues delinquent**, send the money direct to Lee Graves via the Georgetown P.O. Box.

Since dues are due on 1 January every year, it might be a good idea to remember that (and take care of it regularly). **To do that, try putting the SSS on your Christmas card list and include your check every year. Works good and lasts a long time!**

Have a great summertime! Ed.

