

the

# WINDSCREEN

WINTER 2010 ISSUE

JOURNAL OF THE  
INTRUDER ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 1



**VA-65 TRAM AT OMAHA BEACH,  
WITH FRENCH SUPER ETENDARD.  
STORY, PAGE 8.**



## **ON TARGET - ON TIME**

- The DFC Society
  - Troubled *Intruder*
  - Bombing Derby Fever
  - *Intruder* at Normandy
  - Whidbey's Gateway Park
  - When Failure was not an Option
- [www.intruderassociation.org](http://www.intruderassociation.org)



## THE SPAR FROM YAR: A MESSAGE FROM THE IA PRESIDENT

### Greetings and Happy New Year to all,

I hope the Christmas and New Year holidays were joyous, a time to enjoy family and friends, and reflect on our deployed forces and their sacrifices.

Thank each of you for your continued membership in the Intruder Association. We appreciate your support of this unique association of naval warriors who share a passion for "Preserving the Legend of the *Intruder*," maintaining contact with fellow comrades and being a part of numerous worthy projects. As I celebrate another year, I treasure my *Intruder* friendships and the doors that have opened for me because of naval aviation, the *Intruder*, and continuing to be involved in both communities.

Looking back at 2009, I am proud of the association's continued accomplishments and activities. We had continued growth in area luncheons, tours, and get-togethers chartered by alumni and area directors. We assisted in a number of *Intruders* on display, including the bomb load-out of the Smithsonian Air & Space Udvar-Hazy *Intruder*. The NW Team completed the NAS Whidbey *Intruder* and *Prowler* aircraft display with the beautiful addition of the flags. The association sponsored ads in *The Hook* magazine and in the *Hook '09 Reunion* program. The *Intruders* were well represented at our Hook '09 *Intruder* booth, hosted the Annual *Intruder* Breakfast and co-hosted the "Scooters N Truders" hospitality suite with the *Skyhawk* Association. Sadly, we lost a number of comrades who shall not be forgotten. The association continues the planning and logistics for our next *Intruder* Reunion in May, 2010, and is closer to the perpetual *Intruder* scholarship to be administered by the Tailhook Association.

Looking forward, the National Navy & Marine *Intruder* gathering of Eagles Reunion is in Washington, DC, May 20-23. VP Gator Byrum and his team have put together a great schedule and venue at the Hyatt Reston Town Center near Dulles Airport, now taking reservations. Recommend all who plan to attend or think they will attend to make your hotel reservations

(703-709-1234) and airline reservations now. Reunion details are highlighted in the website [www.intrudersassociation.org](http://www.intrudersassociation.org). There are a number of folks planning squadron reunions at the DC reunion.

This is the year of Intruder Association elections, and there are a number of officers planning to turn over the helm. There will be a '99 *Intruders*' announcement with details soon on which offices will be open for soliciting nominees. Please consider a position and making a difference in the association. This year, we also hope to reach our goal of the \$40,000 funding of the eternal *Intruder* Scholarship Fund. Donations can be online via the IA website or by sending a check made out to the "Intruder Association" annotated *Intruder* Scholarship to:

Geoff Swanberg  
3504 Beaver Ford Road  
Woodbridge, VA 22192

Membership and participation is the life-blood of the organization. Get the word out to your *Intruder* A-6 and EA-6A officers and enlisted friends and contacts to join the IA and come to the reunion. As I mentioned in the last issue, I am amazed at times when I meet a former *Intruder* and ask if they are association members, only to find out they did not know there is such an organization or that they flat did not renew their membership long ago. These same folks typically don't know about past and future *Intruder* reunions. Send a reminder and let them know, "We want you now."

Thank you for your faithful membership, support, participation and belief in "Preserving the Legend of the *Intruder*." I hope to see you all in Washington, DC, for *Intruder* Reunion 2010.

Best wishes and all take care,  
Larry P. Yarham.



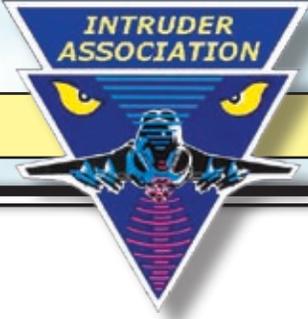
Larry P. Yarham



Your leadership at work in Reno: Hook '09 booth is manned by IA President Larry Yarham (L), and IA Membership Chairman Clyde Cain (R).



And then there's Larry and Jack: IA President Larry Yarham (L), and the IA's newest webmaster, Jack Jordan (R), are shown still standing at the *Intruder* Association Booth at Hook '09.



# AIR PLAN

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## **Intruder Association**

### **Officer Contacts**

- Chairman  
Tim Beard  
chairman@intruderassociation.org
- President  
Larry Yarham  
president@intruderassociation.org
- Vice President  
Bruce Byrum  
vicepresident@intruderassociation.org
- Secretary  
Steve McCaslin  
secretary@intruderassociation.org
- Treasurer  
Geoff Swanberg  
treasurer@intruderassociation.org
- Director, Navy East  
Jim Joyner  
directornavyeast@intruderassociation.org
- Director, Navy So'West  
Clyde Cain  
directornavysouthwest@intruderassociation.org
- Director, Navy Nor'West  
Al Siebecke  
directornavynorthwest@intruderassociation.org
- Director, Marines East  
Bo Boswell  
directormarineeast@intruderassociation.org
- Director, Marines West  
John Valovich  
directormarineswest@intruderassociation.org
- Director, Navy Enlisted  
Bud Jackson  
directornavyenl@intruderassociation.org
- Director, Marine Enlisted  
Steve Dumovich  
directormarenl@intruderassociation.org
- Membership Chairman  
Clyde Cain  
membership@intruderassociation.org
- Historian, Vice-Webmaster  
John Thornell  
historian@intruderassociation.org  
vicewebmaster@intruderassociation.org
- Webmaster  
Jack Jordan  
webmaster@intruderassociation.org
- Windscreen Editor  
Steve McCaslin  
editor@intruderassociation.org

## **Windscreen Staff**

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# Plan Now! *Intruder* Reunion in 2010

**Washington, D.C.**  
**May 20-23**  
Reston Town Center, Reston, Virginia



At our IA Reunion in San Diego, the *Intruder* Association voted to re-enlist the services of Ray Casey and his Military Reunion Planners to assist with the reunion in Washington, D.C., for 2010. Ray has negotiated a terrific venue and we have signed a contract with Hyatt Regency in Reston, Virginia, to hold *Intruder* Reunion 2010.

The Hyatt Regency in Reston sits immediately adjacent to Reston Town Center, which is on the Reston Parkway just off Toll Road 267, west of the 495 Beltway around Washington, D.C.

The shopping and dining in this area are superb, with a number of exclusive stores and outstanding restaurants in the Town Center, with ample free parking.

We agreed to 432 guest rooms with a room rate of \$129/night. This means over the course of Wednesday, 19 May through Saturday, 22 May, we are looking for about 200 or so guests. Part of the contract includes an agreement to us for the banquet facilities for the reunion dinner on Saturday, 22 May. It also includes a hospitality suite, and we intend to apply for a banquet permit to allow us to serve our own drinks in the suite.

There are a large number of activities that we need help with for planning purposes, and we need volunteers. Activities thus far include: visits to Udvar-Hazy Air and Space Museum at Dulles; Marine Corps Museum in Quantico; and



[WWW.INTRUDERASSOCIATION.ORG](http://WWW.INTRUDERASSOCIATION.ORG)

tours to memorials and museums downtown in our nation's capital. We are looking at Friday for the Sunset Parade at Marine Barrack, (8<sup>th</sup> & I). The new Capitol Visiting Center is open and arrangements can be made for group tours. We also want to offer a golf event and any other sport activities that someone would like to help us plan. We also plan to hold our Annual Memorial Service, in honor of our lost comrades, at the Vietnam Memorial.

Although it seems like there is a lot of time, I am assured by the group on the west coast that we need to be busy. I solicit your assistance. Please sign up to help or contact me personally at: 703-938-6363 or e-mail [byrumb@verizon.net](mailto:byrumb@verizon.net). We intend to hold an organizational planning meeting with members in the Washington, D.C., area soon.

*Bruce Byrum, Convention Planning*

## LETTERS: *Incoming!*

### There she was.

Dear Editor

I thought I recognized an old friend on the cover of the Summer 2009 issue of the "Windscreen,"--A6A BUNO 154137. I checked my logbook and confirmed that the VA-196 loadout for the 1968 cruise on *Constellation* was ten consecutive new BUNOs, numbers 154145 through 154156, plus a bunch of A-6Bs.

Close, but no hits there. However, I figured that vintage of aircraft would be due for rework in a couple of years, and I had been a test pilot at NARF Norfolk after VA-196 until I became an AEDO. So I checked further and there she was--I flew 154137 at NARF in May, 1970.

The A-6 remains my favorite aircraft, but it's not a whole

lot higher on the list than the F-8A, my first "fleet" aircraft, or my last aircraft, the F-15A/B/C/D/E, which I flew at McDonnell Douglas while I was the Navy Plant Rep there. In any case, those are a whole lot of nice memories.

CAPT Elwood J. "Skip" Suereth, USN (Ret.)  
Bradenton, Florida

**99, we welcome your comments.** *Email your letters and comments to [editor@intruderassociation.org](mailto:editor@intruderassociation.org), or address letters to: Steve McCaslin, 839 Hawks Run Ct SE, Leesburg, VA 20175. Include your full name and city/state in all correspondences. Electronic communication is preferred. Letters may be edited for length and style.*

## DEPARTING



James Michael Geyton, Jr.  
8 December, 2009

## WHEN FAILURE WAS NOT AN OPTION



Tanker Tales from the “Original” Gulf War  
*The Arabs of VA-115 Remember*



Although definitely a “secondary” capability for the A-6, the midair refueling mission was a critical element of the *Intruder* legend, and is not without its moments. A recent exchange of e-mails among

the VA-115 Arabs (class of ‘70-‘72) related some memorable tanker (KA-6D) episodes from those days on Yankee Station, flying with CVW-5 from the decks of the USS *Midway* (CVA-41).

**T**he Arabs have maintained a close and active association in the nearly forty years since the squadron supported air operations in North and South Vietnam and Laos. This on-line conversation was initiated by Dave “Snako” Kelly, and was quickly picked up by squadron mates Jack Keegan, Rob “Toon” Ponton, Jim Horsley, Dave Walsh, Thom Watson, and John Koch. Former Litton techrep Mike Nettles added his perspective, and the tales were further enhanced by contributions from former Arab skippers Paul Barrish and Admiral E. Inman “Hoagy” Carmichael.

### The thread began in late October with a Snako Kelly email:

*“...there has been a dialog going on about tanker missions, and some of the associated sea stories. I really enjoy these, because they really speak to professionalism in Naval Aviation, i.e., whatever the mission, you do it the best possible way that it can be done. There may have been a lot of things about the Navy that I thought were done in a less than optimal way, but the crews in -115 seemed to be particularly adept at completing the mission in the best way possible. (I think this says a great deal about leadership, because it couldn't be attributed to all us loose-cannon JOs!)”*

As anyone who found himself low on fuel approaching the ship can relate, the lowly tanker mission often became a high priority. Hoagy Carmichael, who commanded the squadron in 1971-72, described a “Yo-Yo” tanker mission he and Roger Krueger flew. (His story credits Flight Deck Trouble-Shooter ADJ1 Pat Wells, who ‘pre-started’ the aircraft for him):



*“Sorta funny how a subject like tanker mission could get so many of us to go look in our log books to see when we flew a tanker mission. Well, I did the same and I did fly a few... **believe me, I did.***

*I can only remember one flight that will always be with me. I was the ready tanker pilot one night when we-- I think Roger was my BN-- were both sitting Ready 5, in full flight gear of course, when we got the call to launch the Ready Tanker.*

*Roger and I hightailed to the flight deck. Yep, there it was behind the island, tail over the edge and Air Boss telling us to ‘Hurry Up!’ (Are there any other words in an Air Boss’s vocabulary?)*

*As we approached the plane, we were met by 1st class Wells. He said, ‘Skipper, I have already checked the plane over and started the starboard engine!’*

*I have to admit, I was a little surprised, but Wells was so good in my eyes that I didn’t think twice and climbed in. As I remember, we launched, gave fuel to the Phantoms and recovered on that recovery cycle. All thanks to the initiative of Pat Wells.”*

### Back to Snako:

*“I had an experience with Wells on the flight deck that was rather interesting. I think it was the one and only plane I downed on the cat. (And I think, like most of us, if maintenance said it could fly, then we flew it.)*

### **WARNING - SEA STORY TO FOLLOW:**

*(“this is no shit.”)*

*John Koch and I were scheduled for a day Alpha. We manned-up, taxied to the cat and ran up our engines. We heard a muffled explosion of some kind, and we went to suspend. Once we were secure, Wells came up my ladder, and [Maintenance Control Officer] Bud Wilson came up John’s. Bud was giving me a violent thumbs up. I turned to Wells and shouted for his opinion. Wells gave me a thumbs down. I turned to Bud and he was glaring at Wells and still violently indicating thumbs up. At that point I think my Irish temper got the best of me. I invited Bud to climb into the right seat in John’s place, if he really felt that plane was ready to go.*

*...We were then shut down and towed off the cat. Petty Officer Wells was really an exceptional sailor. I never heard from him after I left active duty. I did write a recommendation for him to go to the Warrant Officer Program, and I know he was accepted into that program. (If anyone has any contact with him, I would like to touch base.)” continued...*

## VA-115 IN VIETNAM AND LAOS

### Thom Watson added one from there:

*“This exchange has caused me to recall various tanker missions, and one stands out – It had nothing to do with the amount of gas passed, however. Bob Wilson and I had gassed up the F-4s and had the rest of the cycle to kill. Bored, we decided to test the KA-6 service ceiling, and began a slow orbit over the ship gradually increasing altitude – as I recall, we got to about 60,000 feet before positive pressure breathing started ...*

*Just before we reached 63K or so, we were shocked to see a contrail over our heads – way over our heads, at least another 15-20K above us! The contrail was headed north, and approaching Hainan Island.*

*We reported what we were observing to the ship – concerned that whatever it was we saw would soon enter Chinese airspace – A few minutes later ‘Jehovah’ came up on the radio, and told us that we had not seen anything and to forget it. We decided it was a SR-71 mission (what else could make that altitude and with complete deniability?)”*

### Jack Keegan added a great tale of how well a cross-decked Air Force exchange pilot fared with the Arabs:

“I’ll relate the most interesting tanker hop that I had. It was during the second cruise and I had an Air Force puke in the right seat (standard drill to get them a cat shot and trap). We were BARCAP and the F-4 guys were Mugs [McKuen] and Mike Rabb (LSO) from VF-161. As you all know, at that point in the war the F-4 guys were always painting MiGs over the north, but the guys in control would never let them engage. I can still hear one of the F-4 guys telling the control guys (whoever they were) that they had bogeys and wanted permission to engage. The response was always quick and was always ‘Negative’. This time, the control guys said ‘Standby’..I about jumped out of my skin. You probably remember that they engaged and that Mugs shot down both MiGs. What you might not know is that he shot the second MiG off Mike’s tail and that Mike was freaked because he was out of gas and still over the North.

This is the good part. I called Mike and asked him where he was and where he was headed. I told him that I would rendezvous with him and headed west toward feet dry. The AF puke went nuts and told me that I couldn’t do this because we had no ECM, etc. Not that I was a smart ass in those days, but I think that I said to him ‘Watch me!’ We never went feet dry, but were probably in the SAM envelope when he plugged. The AF puke was ghost white as I remember. Rob made it back and the ship was actually cooperative as we were cleared straight in from many miles north.

I don’t think that many of you knew this story. Didn’t want the old guys (senior officers) to lose any more hair than they already had, so I kept it to myself... Don’t know what happen to the AF puke.”



### Snako recalled another tanker incident involving the notorious Mugs McKuen:

“I was taking a Middie up in the right seat of a KA-6D somewhere in the summer of the second cruise [1972]. We were supposed to tank the F-4s in the Alpha on their way to the beach. A whole covey of Charger F-4s (VF-161) pulled up on my left wing, and there was something very unusual about Charger lead. (I would find out later that it was Mugs McKuen). He gave me a hand-sign to take fuel, and I extended the drogue as he slid in behind me.

After taking several thousand pounds of fuel, Mugs disengaged, and Charger Two slid into position. Mugs pulled up on my right wing to wait for the rest of the tanking. It was at that point I asked the Midi to get the side number on the F-4 on our right wing. The Middie turned in his seat, and then he stammered something loudly into the ICS, turned to me, and started waving his arms. It turns out during this whole evolution, Mugs had his helmet off, and he had donned a full monkey head Halloween mask. When the Middie turned to look at the F-4 all he could see in the front cockpit was a gorilla flying the aircraft. I guess that sort of blew him away.”

### Jack Keegan corroborated Snako’s story:

*“I can validate the Mugs Monkey story. He did the same thing with me and a Middie. I told the Middie that the fighter losses were heavy and they were training anybody/anything they could...”*



FARTPAC



ATKRON ONE ONE FIVE

## THE GOLDEN DAYS OF TANKING



KA-6D



TANKER CENTURION

### Dave "Spook" Walsh provided another hair-raiser:

"All-- I guess the statute of limitations has expired on us by now. Tankers: In November 2002, Kid Sowe and I were flying a day tanker in heavy thunderstorm activity. We had passed all of our gas and were just waiting for the recovery to start. Suddenly, a Switchbox F-4 came up with low state. The Whale had fuel but couldn't find the fighter. So, we started a slow climb (without telling the ship) to look for the fighter. He was down to 1000# and I knew he was going for a swim soon. We climbed on top of a storm and spotted him about 2 miles away on our nose. We hung a 4.5 G starboard turn, popped the boards and ran out the hose passing through 270 knots. The Phantom plugged in and we hit the override to pass him as much as we could get out. We were down to 2500# ourselves at that point. The Whale was able to join up and pass some more to the Switch. We were Bingo, and after some confusing exchanges with the ship, we cut the crap and popped up to 40,000 feet and glided to Danang. Fortunately, the Air Force had their act together and we landed on fumes. Interestingly, the Switchbox also had binged to Danang and hot-refueled right next to us. The Phantom driver told us he only had 400# of fuel remaining when he had plugged us! Sowe and I had free drinks at Cubi for quite awhile after that line period as I recall. "

### The legendary Jim Horsley then joined in, sharing a story with Bob "Toon" Ponon:

"TOON—I'd love to hear your rendition of our day overhead tanker flight when directed to give everything we had to boltering *Phantoms*. You mentioned something about a low fuel light before we ever started down... never saw the ship on the first pass. And the rest of the story??....Toon, over to you!" -JIM



### Toon responded, summing up not only that incident, but the overall philosophy that drove the squadron throughout the war:

*Horse et al,*

*My youngest son says he worries about my wife and me because one of us forgets and the other makes it up.*

*Couple of thoughts:*

1. *Over the years, I suppose "naïve confidence" or "clueless confidence" may have been applied to my general outlook. But I gotta tell ya, Horse, being crewed with Snake and then you turned a bunch of that confidence into "informed confidence." Truth to tell, failure simply wasn't an option for any of us Arabs.*

2. *I remember saying/thinking something along the lines of "1460 pounds of fuel plus 200/minus 100; the stand pipe's in the back of the service tank; so being in a descent we got 1660 pounds remaining instead of 1360".*

3. *I remember you saying something about "tighten your lap belt and check your face curtain just in case."*

4. *As I recall, Midway had the best damned CATCC in the fleet. Didn't we have to fly case 2 or case 3 all the time following loss of the E-2 at the end of the first deployment? Our controllers were damned good and would set us up well. A "short turn in" was no problem for them or for us.*

5. *You stayed on the instruments and my eyes were outside.*

6. *Fuzz [Gary Forsberg] was on the platform. His "roger ball" call would calm any "wobbly knees."*

7. *Finally, as you well know, I was blessed with a short memory, so "interesting flights" were quickly forgotten, but only after completing Spook's award folder notes.*

*For whatever reason, I've come to realize the VA-115 Arabs were something special. For all of our individual failings, be it a forgotten MR switch; forgotten external light switch at night; "feet dry" or selecting "nose" vice "tail" on the ACU panel resulting in 12 snake eye retards vice slick, we made us some quality history.*

### Ed. Notes:

(1) *These exchanges are also featured in the latest Tailhook Association On-line Newsletter, courtesy of John Carmichael, editor and 2009 Honorary Tailhooker of the Year (and son of the Arabs' second skipper, Admiral E. Inman "Hoagy" Carmichael).*

(2) *Many of the images in this article come from Buzz Nau's great USS Midway Historical Site [www.CV41.org](http://www.CV41.org) - a great site for all former Midway/CVW-5 vets. Buzz was an early*

*and strong supporter of the restoration of the Intruder Ready Room (Ready FIVE) on board the USS Midway Museum in San Diego.*

(3) *The A-6A Intruder that sits on the flight deck of the USS Midway Museum is painted in the 1971-72 markings of the VA-115 Arabs. The canopy rail carries the names of LT Mike McCormick and LTJg Al Clark, who launched from Midway on January 10, 1973, to become the last Intruder flight crew to give their lives in the Vietnam conflict.*

## INTRUDER AT NORMANDY

By Tom "Hoho" Hoioos

Reggie Carpenter's description of the 65<sup>th</sup> Annual D-Day ceremonies and flyby made me recall my own flyby at Normandy 20 years ago in 1989. It was one of the best "good deals" I ever had but it really wasn't supposed to be that way. I was in VA-65, part of CVW-13, on USS *Coral Sea*. Just a month into my second Med cruise, the ship was scheduled for a 10 day (yes, 10 day!) port call in Marseille, France. One of our air wing *Hornet* skippers knew the skipper of a French *Super Etendard* squadron at Base D'Aeronautique Navale (BAN) Landivisiau, located in Brittany near the English Channel. A det of air wing *Hornets* and *Intruders* was hastily put together to fly up to Landivisiau and train with the French while the ship was in port. It seemed like sort of a last minute idea, and we didn't get the go until the night before; so I think this was supposed to be a bad deal but it sure turned out differently.

On 29 June, a pair of *Intruders* launched off the ship and headed north. I was flying with my regular pilot, LT Mike Murphy, as dash 2, with two of our department heads in the lead. I don't think the French had received our flight plan and there was some confusion with the French controllers. We finally ended up on one of their GCI frequencies and the GCI controllers handled us all the way across France. When we arrived at Landivisiau, the weather was something like 600 overcast so we accepted a section PAR. The French controller spoke English very well, but for some reason our lead went NORDO during the approach and passed us the lead! When we broke out at 1 1/2 miles and I could see the familiar, but somewhat different, lens on the left side of the runway, I knew everything was going to be all right.

We taxied in, and before we even had a chance to shut down a guy dressed up like Louis the XVI was handing a couple of Heinekens up the boarding ladder. Murph and I toasted each other right there in the cockpit. The French were getting geared up for their Bastille Day Bicentennial on July 14, and they had pulled out all the stops.

The next morning our maintenance guys still had not arrived in the C-130 and none of our four *Hornets* and two *Intruders* had been refueled. I volunteered to stay with the airplanes during the brief and show the French ground crews how to refuel them. The brief didn't last long, and we had just finished refueling the last jet when the French Super E's were starting up. When Murph arrived, I asked him what I missed in the brief. He looked kind of bewildered and said, "I'm not really sure what we are doing but I know after takeoff we are rendezvousing overhead the field at 1000 feet, right turns, and 350 knots! Then I think we are doing a low level with the

Super Es in the lead." I don't remember if we ever did talk the French into doing left hand rendezvous for us.

The first low level with the French was terrific. On the first leg, we headed east along the northern coast of Brittany. I remember glancing at the radar and seeing a very bright return on a small island that stuck out into the English Channel. When I looked up, I remember thinking, "That looks like Mont Saint Michele." Mont Saint Michele is a very picturesque island with a monastery and surrounding town, and had been on the cover of my high school French book. It was pretty cool to see it pass about three miles down the right side of the airplane. It was about this time that the formation was jumped by a French F-8 *Crusader*. It was the first F-8 I had ever seen outside a museum, and he must have been super-sonic because he blew through our battle box like we were standing still!

Word must have gotten back to the boat that this det wasn't such a bad deal after all, because DCAG Bob Leitzel showed up a couple of days later. On 3 July, we briefed a flight of two *Intruders* with a Super E and a reconnaissance version of the older *Etendard*. I was flying with DCAG. The French pilots told us we would do a low level and after that would join up for some photos taken by the recce bird. Our wingman had a gear problem on takeoff and had to RTB. When it came time for the photos, DCAG really tightened it up on the Super E. I knew we were flying north up the coast and then

turned east across the Cotentin Peninsula. I will never forget looking out the right side of the airplane the moment this picture was taken and realizing that we were at the American Cemetery at Omaha Beach. I was very proud to show the colors of a U.S. Navy aircraft over the graves of so many who had given their lives in the service of their country.

The next day was July 4, and the French threw a great Fourth of July party. The French Naval aviators were true warriors and very much like us. Many of them were combat veterans from 1982 and 1983 Multi-National Force operations in Lebanon. They toasted the Lafayette Escadrille, the American Doughboys of WWI and the American GIs of WWII. They apologized that the French government had not allowed American F-111s to overfly France on their way from England to strike Libya in 1986. They shared our *Spirit of Attack* and disrespected fighter guys every bit as much as we did. I was sad to see it all come to an end.

*Ed Note: Tom Hoioos, CDR USN (ret.) was an Intruder B/N from 1986-1996 with VA-65, VA-128, Strike Aircraft Test Directorate, and VA-115*



VA-65 A-6E TRAM 155678 with DCAG Bob Leitzel and LT Tom Hoioos over the American Cemetery at Omaha Beach, Normandy, on July 3, 1989. Don't be fooled by the "Marine" on the side of the French Navy *Super Etendard*. Marine is "Navy" in French.

## BOMBING DERBY FEVER

By Steve Foster, retired Grumman tech rep

From the day she was introduced to the fleet until the day she was put to pasture, the A-6 was involved in “bombing derbies” to determine bragging rights among Navy and Marine squadrons. Trophies were passed around and kegs consumed on the completion of these fever-pitched events. A-6A Track Radar boresight, A-6E Antenna boresight, TRAM laser spot error and release advance/delay were charted in an attempt to get individual aircraft signatures. When all the system errors were added, the hits were in right field. When they canceled, you had a bull’s-eye bomber. Most jets were somewhere in between. In the early days of the ASN-31 Inertial System, velocities tended to wind up every time around the target pattern so the first system release was usually the best.

Pilots were matched with B/Ns and crews were matched with their favorite side number in an attempt to gain an advantage. Crews had their favorite delivery methods and altitude, airspeed, dive angles and such were closely held secrets. The purists would say the release method should be one of the tactical ones used in combat, but this was usually not the method that would insure the best hit. In combat, you drop a string of bombs, while in a derby it was only one.

Pressure was on the maintenance crews and tech reps to tweak the systems to get the errors to cancel and the video recorder to work. Ordies were schooled on the importance of getting the MERs on straight, the jam nuts just so, and no bent fins on the MK-76s. The tech reps had to sit in on the debrief and keep track of stats for each jet in their little green notebook. God forbid you should put the skipper’s jet into a phase inspection the night before the Friday afternoon “CO versus CO one-run one-bomb, best hit, losing squadron buys the winner a keg of beer at happy hour.”

On one occasion where the fever rose to super-heated steam temperatures, the Marines of VMA-533 at MCAS Cherry Point competed in the NAS Oceana MATWING I annual A-6 derby and were leading with one more Navy squad-

ron to compete, when it returned from cruise. It was rumored in the “Hawks” ready room that the Commodore got up close and personal with the CO to make sure he understood the importance of their participation. It worked because they put the first team in and won the derby.

I had the good fortune to spend 27 years as a Grumman Weapon System tech rep on Marine and Navy A-6 hangar decks. I was able to fly right seat occasionally to evaluate sys-

*“Pilots were matched with B/Ns and crews were matched with their favorite side number in an attempt to gain an advantage. Crews had their favorite delivery methods and altitude, airspeed, dive angles and such were closely held secrets.”*

tem problems and gain an appreciation for what is involved in hitting the target. On one occasion, the skipper gave me a six-pack of MK-76s and a target time at BT-11. Capt Ken Bradley was my pilot, and he gave me a flyover the barge target before turning inbound near Cape Lookout for the real thing. I practiced what I preached to the B/Ns and locked onto the barge in track, while scan mode with auto velocity correct on and with my head in the boot, watched the cursor track down on the radar. When we were cleared to turn the Master Arm On, Ken pulled the commit trigger and the MK-76 came off when the system released it. The range officer came up on the radio and said, “Your hit on that run, Sir, was a bull’s-eye!” Ken looked over at me with a look of surprise or disbelief. On the subsequent five runs in various degraded system modes and the velocities winding up, I ate some humble pie—but could at least say the first bomb I dropped was a bull’s-eye. For those of us now-retired folks, *those were the golden years.*

**Sign up now!**

**INTRUDER ASSOCIATION REUNION**

**May 20-23**

*Washington, DC*

• Reston Town Center •

[www.intruderassociation.org](http://www.intruderassociation.org)



## TROUBLED INTRUDER

By Jim Roth

Piloting a new production A-6 *Intruder* on a Navy acceptance test flight near Grumman Calverton airfield, had been routine to this point. Suddenly we were dealing with an in-flight emergency. My bombardier-navigator (B/N) was puzzled. I was as well. Neither of us had seen anything unusual while completing a hard 360 degree turn at 8,000 feet altitude. As I advanced throttles smartly to full power to regain lost speed, we heard a thud and then strange sounds as an engine flamed out.

Loss of an engine in flight is rare. It means instant trouble. We could only anticipate the worst while hoping for the best, a virtue that serves airmen well. Years of training and flight experience were my preparation for dealing calmly with airborne difficulties no matter what the circumstance. During my 20-year flying career, I'd flown 5,500 pilot hours in an array of Navy aircraft with an occasional minor emergency. I now was experiencing my first mid-air collision and subsequent engine failure. My 3,000 flight hours in the *Intruder* qualified me to handle most any airborne emergency, so I hoped.

Here's a call for "the right stuff" — 'twas time for **attention to detail!** Commencing emergency procedures, we glanced about quickly and listened intently. While assessing the situation, we evaluated the logic of attempting a return to Grumman. One engine was out, and there was no telling if the other might fail. We had an aircraft with unknown damage, but it seemed flyable.

As I hit the dump switch, and observed fuel spewing a trail in the sky behind us, I gently turned towards home.

"Just how hairy is this thing going to get?" I asked my crewmate, knowing that he had no answers either. In short order, we agreed that it was doubtful a collision with another aircraft had occurred.

The situation seemed less critical as we continued, with no new problems. We had flying speed, a safe altitude and normal feel on the flight controls. . . The fact that I was strapped to an armed ejection seat with a parachute and survival raft didn't enter my mind. Adrenaline was pumping and our "can do" spirit took over.

Keying the mike on my UHF radio, I called to alert Grumman of our airborne emergency.

"We're out east, near Orient Point at around 8,000 feet. A collision with something has wiped out the starboard engine. We're declaring an emergency and heading your way . . . request straight-in approach with priority landing clearance."

"Grumman - 52, please say again, your transmission is breaking up." Gail, the tower operator, barked at us assertively. She sensed trouble.

Gail's questions came in rapid-fire order. As her interrogation continued, I kept my responses orderly and professional. Timely coordination of the emergency effort was her job. Getting the *Intruder* back on the runway, in one piece, was my job.

Another radio call came:

"Grumman 52, this is Grumman Tower, over?"

"Go ahead, tower."

"Call, runway in sight."

"It'll be soon, very soon."

"We're rolling crash equipment at this time."

"Thanks!"

"Request present range and heading inbound."

"15 miles . . . 220 degrees."

"Report present altitude."

"Passing 5,000 feet, descending for 'straight-in' to Runway 22. Gear and flaps coming down. Please check us visually. Is arresting gear rigged? Just in case of brake failure?"

"Roger, we're rigged. Request fuel state."

"Fuel . . . 1800 pounds."

"Roger, keep tower advised."

"Grumman - 52, will do. Thanks."

While radio chatter was carrying on, in the cockpit, we were busy flying, adjusting and gaining confidence that we'd make it back safely. The smell of jet fuel after the thud and engine flame-out had dissipated. Chance of fire, or the likelihood of jet fuel leaking internally, was slight, so we rationalized. I kept a keen eye out for glowing fire warning lights which meant *eject . . . eject*, no questions asked!

Scurrying through cockpit checks and emergency procedures in an effort to stay ahead of things kept us fully occupied. In-depth mission debriefing sessions routinely followed completion of Navy acceptance flights. This wasn't normal routine. We wanted to be well prepared with comprehensive details.

I lowered the landing gear and flaps early to ensure wheels and flaps down for touchdown. As the duty runway came into view, so did the reassuring sight of a line of fire and crash trucks on the roll.

The sight of a virgin A-6 aircraft, having just experienced spreading its wings, limping home, with its crew struggling to land safely, unquestionably aroused anxiety among those watching.

Feeling the "sweet clunk" of runway contact brought stress levels a welcomed relief. Our short rollout was anticlimatic. Once stopped, before engine shutdown, a flight line crewman crawled under the *Intruder* to insert landing gear safety pins to safeguard against inadvertent collapse. Firefighters in full battle gear crept close with fire foam lines charged. Quickly, and with a true sense of appreciation, I shut-down the good engine that had given us sufficient thrust to return safely.

In short order, a waiting tractor hooked to the *Intruder* for tow to the parking area and post flight inspection. We became the center of attraction, as a mega welcoming committee gathered to view damaged to the *Intruder*. Learning more details and the truth of the matter followed. Bleeding red hydraulic oil and looking battered, the sturdy aircraft had returned with its crew, avoiding disaster. Hearty pats on the back and firm handshakes brought broad grins as we strolled back to the hangar for debriefing. The pressure was off; the relief felt damn good.



## THE DFC SOCIETY

From Chuck Sweeney, President

The Distinguished Flying Cross was established by Congress on July 2, 1926, to recognize the gallantry of World War I pilots. The first Distinguished Flying Cross citations were presented to the Pan American Flight crews on 2 May, 1927, by President Coolidge for their five ship, 22,000 mile flight. President Coolidge presented the first Distinguished Flying Cross medal on 11 June, 1927, to Captain Charles A. Lindbergh of the Army Air Corps Reserve for his solo flight of 33 ½ hours spanning 3600 miles across the Atlantic Ocean in 1927. Lindbergh is also a member of the Distinguished Flying Cross Society.

The Distinguished Flying Cross Society (DFCS), founded in 1994, is made up of personnel of all five military services who have been awarded the DFC. The Society is a unique in that it represents all wars and campaigns from World War I forward, all ranks, all aviation crew positions, and both genders. In addition, relatives of some of the recipients are associate members.

While the U.S. Marines may be looking for a few good men, the Distinguished Flying Cross Society is looking for many good men. Being an A-4 Skyhawk pilot flying from 27 Charlie's in Vietnam, I am very aware of the missions that the Intruders flew in that war and in subsequent conflicts. We are looking for personnel who were awarded the DFC, and since numerous Intruder pilots and B/Ns were awarded DFCs (many were awarded multiple medals), we would like you to consider joining the DFC Society.

The Intruder Association and The DFC Society are both 501(c)(19)s with similar goals of camaraderie, scholarships

for descendants and historical legacy. Family members derive great satisfaction in seeing the recipient's name and citation on the DFC Wall of Honor on our website for all to view. Among a number of memorabilia society members can procure, two significant display items include a reproduction of the "Distinguished Flying Cross" painting by American Master Artist Ruth Mayer (the original is hanging in the San Diego Air & Space Museum) and the second is a plaque with a regulation medal and personalized nameplate.



If you have been awarded a DFC or know someone who has, check out the DFCS website (<http://dfcsociety.org/>) for information on the benefits and requirements for joining, as well as an application form that can be downloaded. Families are also encouraged to enroll a deceased DFC recipient and become an associate member. For additional information, call our toll-free number at 1- 866-332-6332.

## TROUBLED INTRUDER CONTINUED

Not until after extensive post-flight inspection did we learn that a goose, or maybe a couple, had been ingested in flight. The engine was destroyed. Goose bones and feathers were found in the intake duct and throughout the engine. Fan blades from the compressor section had broken loose and passed into the hot turbine section where power is produced. Quick stoppage had caused engine implosion hurling steel blades out front of *Intruder*. A hail of shrapnel pelted the aircraft as it passed through the flying debris.

With hydraulic oil spewed inside and out, from severed oil lines, the aircraft was a bloody mess with bad smells to match. Upon implosion, the engine's flying compressor blades were like small knives, cutting and denting as they hit and penetrated the aircraft. The sturdy *Intruder* proved durable and capable enough to survive "the goose's noose."

Further inspection found the good engine's throttle cable partially severed by flying turbine blades. The few strands remaining intact provided throttle control sufficient to allow completion of the flight to touchdown. We were lucky things turned out as they did. Crew ejection would have been the

alternative had the damaged throttle cable parted while in flight, rendering the remaining operable engine useless.

The freaky bird strike incident had several "ifs and buts." It was the first time in my career I'd made contact with a bird in flight. Bente, whom I'd kept in the dark, first got wind of my *Intruder* being "goosed" when she overheard the story, told at a social function, some weeks later. That evening, during our drive home to bed, the question came up.

"What else do you suppose is going to happen these last weeks before you retire?" I smiled, winked and kept driving.

*Epilog: The day my Intruder had its incident with a goose was 34 years ago. The recent TV news story of the US Air flight that was "double-goosed" and forced to ditch in the Hudson River was a wakeup call for me. Bente and I watched the coverage for hours. Her questions and our discussion brought back vivid memories. I jumped on my computer and cranked out this memoir. US Air's Captain "Sully" had a much tougher job to do — he had 155 lives to save.*

## NEW FLAGPOLE DEDICATED AT WHIDBEY'S GATEWAY PARK

By CAPT Dave Williams, USN (Ret). Photos by K.C. Pohtilla.

On Veterans Day, 11 November 2009, a beautiful new flagpole was dedicated at NAS Whidbey Island's Gateway Park. On that date, "Old Glory" was raised for the first time

above the *Intruder* and *Prowler* aircraft that have become a famous Whidbey landmark since the completion of Gateway Park in September, 2007.

Approximately 50 people attended the ceremony, whose speakers included: CAPT Gerral David, Commanding Officer, NAS Whidbey Island; Councilmember Beth Munns (wife of Larry, who holds the record for A-6 hours flown by a pilot), who represented Mayor Jim Slowik; and Linda Haddon, a very patriotic Oak Harbor citizen who spearheaded the flagpole and fund raising project. Joining these three to hoist the first flag was *Intruder* Association representative Sam Bovington, who himself was instrumental in the creation of Gateway Park.

CAPT David stated that he was initially approached over a year ago by Linda Haddon, who told him that while Gateway Park was great, it just wasn't patriotic enough, because it was missing the flag. From that initial conversation, and through the efforts of many, the park's new red, white and blue backdrop came to be. "What better day than Veterans Day to hoist the first flag," CAPT David remarked.

As was the case with the creation of Gateway Park, the addition of this flagpole represents yet another example of the stellar relationship and spirit of cooperation between Oak Harbor and the Navy. A team of representatives from NAS Whidbey and tenant commands, and the City of Oak Harbor, with the *Intruder* Association as a partner, worked together to make Ms. Haddon's dream a reality. In the words of Beth Munns, "Gateway Park reflects a partnership that has sustained for 67 years. When roadblocks appeared, we found solutions. Through our combined efforts, this powerful and beautiful landmark has been realized. The 'Grand Old Flag' that will forever fly here will be like a sentinel who will keep the guard, and watch over our joint community."

As Linda Haddon stated in her letter of appreciation to all who worked on this project, "Driving past the park brings tears to my eyes – day and night! How proud we are



*"As was the case with the creation of Gateway Park, the addition of this flagpole represents yet another example of the stellar relationship and spirit of cooperation between Oak Harbor and the Navy."*

of our service men and women, and of our great land. Thank you, again, for all of the time and effort involved in this most worthwhile endeavor."

*Intruders* everywhere will no doubt agree that NE500 looks so much better with Old Glory flying above her!





# Welcome Aboard

## NEW MEMBERS

James Andersen ..... Virginia Beach, VA	William Green ..... Kingsville, TX	Jeremy Rosenberg ..... Middleburg, VA
Douglas Andre ..... McLean, VA	John Habel ..... Stafford, VA	Michael Rowland ..... Virginia Beach, VA
Ted Bahn ..... Tyngsboro, MA	Stephen Hendricks ..... Spokane, WA	Joe Savadge ..... Dillsburg, PA
Ron Bodamer ..... Coupeville, WA	Steve Huff ..... Annandale, MN	Ned Shuman ..... Annapolis, MD
Charles Bubeck ..... Fairfax, VA	Mike Johannsen ..... Oak Harbor, WA	George Siegle ..... Port Coquitlam, BC
Dennis Burgman ..... Virginia Beach, Va	Richard Lemmon ..... Pittsburg, KS	James Smith ..... Huntsville, AL
David Christy ..... Akron, Ohio	Dennis Miller ..... Bartlett, TN	John Staiger ..... Bellevue, WA
Tom Collins ..... Calhoun City, MS	Jim Miller ..... Anacortes, WA	Mike Waite ..... Cascade, ID
Dennis Draper ..... Dallas, TX	Rob Miller ..... Brookline, MA	David White ..... Lutherville, MD
Michael Durst ..... Hollywood, MD	Pete Moore ..... Pensacola, FL	Rick Williams ..... Nebo, NC
Erick Figueroa ..... Jacksonville, FL	George Moschouris ..... Fairless Hills, PA	Cassin II Young ..... Arnold, MD
Dave Frederick ..... Madison, AL	O'Brien Daniel ..... Seattle, WA	Dennis Zarembka ..... Morris, IL
Wayne Fuchs ..... Orlando, FL	Harry O'Nan ..... Cornelius, NC	
Paul Fuller ..... Aurora, IN	Terry Piper ..... Kansas City, MO	
Richard Getz ..... Uniontown, OH	Patrick Quinn ..... St. Peters, MO	
Eric Graff ..... Tacoma, WA	Terry Rollins ..... Granite City, IL	

*For those of you who may not have received an Intruder Association Welcome package, please send an email to [membership@intruderassociation.org](mailto:membership@intruderassociation.org).*



### Intruder Association Financial Report

1 January 2009 to 31 December 2009

**Beginning Cash (All Accounts) \$42,606**

#### Receipts

Dues via check .....	7,665
Dues via PayPal .....	9,755
Midway RR donations .....	470
Whidbey Gateway contributions ..	3,432
<b>Total Receipts .....</b>	<b>21,320</b>

#### Expenses

PayPal fees .....	427
Legal fees .....	300
Member support	
Postage .....	529
Windscreen .....	6,996
Hook ad .....	1,060
Office supplies .....	144
Memorials	
Scholarship (Tailhook) ..	2,500
Reunions .....	1,177
Midway RR expenses .....	273
Whidbey Gateway expenses ..	1,671
Other fees	
State corporate fee .....	25
Website maintenance .....	4,500
<b>Total Expenses .....</b>	<b>19,602</b>

**Ending Cash (All Accounts) ..... 44,324**

<b>IA operating account .....</b>	<b>28,720</b>
<b>Midway RR account .....</b>	<b>5,728</b>
<b>Whidbey Gateway account .....</b>	<b>9,876</b>
<b>TOTAL .....</b>	<b>\$44,324</b>

**IA Scholarship Fund            \$19,797.25**

*(Submitted by Treasurer Geoff Swanberg)*



### From the IA Secretary:

For a variety of reasons, I am often called upon to send out a '99' message to our membership. To ensure that you receive these messages, I need your help by doing the following:

**1. Please keep your email address updated.**

You can do this by logging in and updating it if it changes. If you have any problems with that, let the webmaster know at [webmaster@intruderassociation.org](mailto:webmaster@intruderassociation.org).

**2. If you have an email service that has a SPAM filter, please go in and set anything from our domain (@intruderassociation.org) to be allowed through.**

The main ones you may see would be Chairman@, President@, Secretary@, Membership@, Editor@, Webmaster@ and Treasurer@ in front of the domain. We get over 60-70 bounces per 99 message from domains like Earthlink asking us to go through a process to let our emails come through. We just don't have the time to do that, so please set your filters to allow us IN so that you get the information more quickly.



# Membership:



## Don't be dropped.

Membership count currently stands at 1,397, but unfortunately, we still have 500-plus with expired memberships. I have sent an email to all of the expired and will give them until the end of January to re-up. At the end of January, they will receive a letter asking them to re-up, or within 30 days, they will be dropped from the rolls. This was discussed and approved at the last board meeting. We would ask for everyone to look at the list in the last Windscreen, and contact those you know.

I look forward to seeing you at the reunion.

Clyde Cain  
Membership Chairman

James Ellis  
Donald Emerson  
Lucian F. Emerson  
Richard Engel  
Jack M. Estes  
John Evans  
Joseph Evans  
David H. Everett  
John W. Everson  
Matthew J. Faletti  
Gerald Feathers  
John Fedyna  
Richard Fellows  
John Fenton  
Robert Ferguson  
Alan Fischer  
Kenneth A. Fish  
Gary J. Flor  
Anthony M. Fortino  
Thomas Frait  
Buddy Franklin  
Dave Frederick  
Robert D. Fregin  
Bob Fuicelli  
John W. Fulcher  
Don Galbraith  
Mitchell Garner  
Bill Gaynor  
Nicholas R. George  
Paul K. German  
Michael Geron  
Charles L. Giacomo  
Gavin J. Giddings  
Dan Gildea  
Craig Gile  
Keith Giles  
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Michael Gleason  
Jim R. Glover  
Tad Godsil  
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Thomas Griffin  
Todd Groszer  
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Jess Gutierrez  
Thomas Hagen  
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Alfred Hall  
William Handy  
Greg Hargrove  
James A. Harler  
Oscar Harris Jr  
Peter Harris  
Harold Hatch

Mike Hayes  
George Headly  
George Henderson  
Kristina J. Hendrickson  
Gary Hentz  
Donald Herman  
Danny Hethcock  
Fred Hewitt  
Ernest Von der Heyden  
Kyle Higgins  
R.D. Hill  
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Robert H. Hoffer  
James D. Hoffman  
Neil Holben  
Walter Holmich  
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Alex Horster  
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James Hower  
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Tom Hunter  
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Alan Baxter  
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Bill Davis  
Jeff Davis  
John B. Davis  
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Charles Dewitt  
James Dickey  
Harlan Dinger  
Dennis Distler  
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Tom Dugan  
Hayward Dunn  
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John Macholz	Brad Musgrove	Randall Richards	David M. Stahlhut	William Wheeler
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Richard Martin	Brian Neunaber	Antonio Robino	Ron Stites	Michael A. Williams
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Marvon Mattingly	Andrew Niemyer	Tom Robson	Nick Stoia	Birdie Williamson
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Branch: \_\_\_\_\_

Pilot  B/N  Maintainer  Ordy  Support  Associate

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**c/o Clyde Cain**  
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