

THE GRAPEVINE

There is a very fine line between "hobby" and "mental illness."

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Meeting And Program

NOTICE: Our May meeting will take place at 7:30 P.M. on the 4th of May. The meeting will be at the FBO (Five Rivers Aviation) on the grounds at KLVK.



Month	Date	Speaker	Topic
March	2nd	Steve Radcliffe	FTN Number details and much more
April	6th	None	EAA Videos
May	4th	Abdi Anvari	Aircraft Engines, New Shop at LVK

For our May Program: Our speaker for this month is Abdi Anvari, he is the president of West Aircraft Engines. He will be talking about his business, and the care of aircraft engines.

Thanks Bruce!

USN/USMC stories

Tall Tails

When flying every day was different!!! I could have added another about two stories that happened at Chu Lai in the summer of 1966. Then there was only the expeditionary field of 4,000 feet.

All takeoffs were with JATO bottles (lots of things went wrong with these - especially at night) and all landings were arrested.

One day we taxied in to VMA-223 from a mission and noticed an Air Force C-123 parked at the main ramp. It had made an emergency landing at Chu Lai.

That night at the club, the only passenger from the C-123 was there. He was an F-100 pilot in his flight suit on crutches and with two broken legs. Of course, we wanted to know how he broke his legs. He told us that he was an F-100F (two seater) Misty Fast FAC. They took turns flying front and back seat. He said that it was his day to go up North in the back seat.

They found the target for the F-105s and marked it with 5" WP rockets. Then, after the 105s were done, they were supposed to fly low and fast and take an after-action picture of the target. He was the guy with the hand-held camera. Of course, the NVA knew the routine and began shooting the shit out of them. The front seat guy did a lot of jinking and somehow, the lens came off the camera and disappeared.

They safely got "feet wet" and in-flight refueled for their return trip home down south to Tui Hua (or wherever). Our guy said that he kept looking for the lens but the front seater said to forget it. They would find it after landing. Upon landing and taxi back, the front seater called "Canopy Clear" and raised the canopy. The lens had landed near one of the actuators for the ejection seat. He said that he heard this tremendous explosion and realized what had happened when he got seat separation about 250 feet up at the top of the arc and saw a miniature F-100 below him missing a canopy. He said that it was like a

"Wily Coyote" cartoon. There was a point where you stop going up, a pause, and then a rapid going down thing. The F-100 didn't have a zero/zero seat either (needed 100 kts and 100 feet). So, he said that he had always heard that in a long fall, one dies of a heart attack before one hits the ground.

So he said he kept shouting: "Come on heart attack."

The drogue chute had deployed and that kept his feet straight down. It was real steep near the taxiway, they had been doing a lot of excavating and it had rained. He hit feet first. The undeployed chute saved his back and kept it straight. He skidded down the embankment into a large pool of water. He had two simple fractures.

Needless to say, he couldn't buy another drink that night.

The second story is the single funniest thing that I have ever seen. It was around September 1966 and they had just completed the installation of the land catapult (Oh good- no more JATO). We had operated out of there for about 3 weeks with the land cat and it worked great. Anyway, there was to be a change of command for Marine Air Group 12. Col. Les Brown was about to hand over MAG-12 to the great, one and only Jay Hubbard.

The change of command ceremony was to coincide with the official inauguration of the first combat tactical SATS (Short Airfield Tactical and can't remember the S) field in the history of the Marine Corps. A real dog and pony show. The guests of honor were the Secretary of the Navy, FMFPAC Lt. General Krulak, 1st Marine Air Wing Commander, MGEN Robinshaw (a great guy by the way - he always flew with 223 and was the world's best wingman because he could hardly see). All pilots not flying were to put on their dungarees for formation in the sand for the change of command. The program then called for all troops to fall out and observe four A-4s to be launched from the land cat.

That was the planned program. Someone (no one would admit who) suggested the day before that two F-4 Phantoms be brought in the night before to be launched after the A-4s. Wouldn't that be a great idea. Well, of course, with a 4 thousand foot strip and 50' wide taxiways, no F-4s had ever been to Chu Lai. But, in the late afternoon the day before the ceremony, two F-4s landed and took the arresting gear. They folded their wings and proceeded to very carefully taxi into the biggest two revetments.

And, of course, the familiar F-4 engine wailing sound followed them everywhere. That night there was much harassment of the F-4 crews in the club about flying an aircraft that needed a committee to perform (2 seats instead of 1). Furthermore, we took to calling the RIO 's (backseat guys) "hare-lipped dogs" because their only job was to shout "MARK MARK" when the pilot reached bomb release altitude. Anyway, the next day those of us not on the flight schedule put on our dungarees and fell in for the ceremony. VMA-123 was led by the world's greatest Squadron Commander and my personal hero to this day, Lt. Col. Bob Sinclair (I was the world's saltiest 2nd Lt. at the time with 125 combat missions and Col. Bob's assigned wingman).

The ceremony went off without a hitch and Jay Hubbard was now our new Group skipper. The dignitaries lined up on the high ground (read sand dune here) with the SECNAV on the right then FMFPAC "The Brute" General Krulak, then General Robinshaw, then the old Group CO, Les Brown and finally Jay Hubbard. Sure enough, they launched four bomb laden A-4's off the land cat. This was ho hum stuff for us because we had been doing it for three weeks already. Next the first F-4 taxied up with folded wings.

The distinctive two F-4 engines were doing a lot of wailing. Up went the F-4's nose wheel on the dolly. The wings were extended and locked. The nose wheel was attached to the dolly with the frangible metal breakaways. The hold-back for the tail was installed. All was ready for the run-up. The two J-57 engines powering the land cat were run-up. The two F-4 engines were run-up to 100%. Man, there was something in this show for everyone.

Tremendous noise from 4 jet engines, dust and smoke. Nothing could go wrong now. The CAT Officer received the salute from the F-4 pilot and he dropped his hand. BOOM the CAT fired. BOOM BOOM both F-4 engines went into afterburner. Now about 60,000 pounds of F-4 and bombs are hurtling down the 1,500 foot CAT. At this point I must interject a minor technical point.

About the frangible metal devices holding the F-4's nose wheel to the dolly: Well, you see, they break away at the end of the 1,500' CAT ride. This, of course is not a problem for an A-4 because it has a long nose wheel and sits up at a pronounced angle. Unfortunately, the F-4 sits parallel to the ground. In order to not make this too technical, both nose wheel frangible devices did what they were supposed to and broke off. One went into the left intake and one went into the right intake. This was problematic for the Phantom. BOOM, the left engine exploded. BOOM, the right engine exploded. The show got much better. Flaming metal parts and discs slicing through the side of the F-4. Then total involvement of flames of the aircraft from the intakes back. BOOM went the ejection seat of the back seater. BOOM went the ejection seat of the front seater. And KABOOM went the F-4 into the sand southeast of the runway.

Then the Three Stooges part: The SECNAV looks to his left at FMFPAC who looks to his left to 1st MAW CO, who looks at the old MAG-12 CO, Colonel Brown, and finally they are all looking at Jay Hubbard. We laughed so hard that some of us fell down.

Both F-4 crewmembers lived but it would have been almost as funny if they hadn't.

By the way, the second F-4 refolded his wings and slowly taxied back to the revetments. They down loaded the bombs and defueled him and he flew back to Danang the next day with a very short takeoff roll. Now, I don't know if this helps you, but it's what I remember. And, to quote Anthony Swofford author of "Jarhead" about the first Gulf War when asked whether his book was fact or fiction, he responded: "I don't know. It's what I remember."

Semper Fi..... -----

This true story is from a pilot who was in VMFA 314 at Chu Lai in '69...Just another day at the office! You Vietnam F4 guys will appreciate this amazing story... Here's another 'bad day' from Chu Lai:

I was one of a half-dozen replacements who checked-in with MAG-13 on August 2. We were not all assigned to VMFA-314 though. There were two other combat squadrons in the Air Group: VMFA-115, the Able Eagles, and VMFA-323, the Death Rattlers. All three squadrons flew the McDonnell Douglas F4B Phantom II and shared common living areas.

Although we may have been in different squadrons, eventually we all got to know each other very well.

The first thing we six rookies did was attend an Air Group briefing in an underground bunker protected by a thick layer of sandbags. This bunker served as our group intelligence center.

Suddenly, an urgent radio call interrupted our briefing. We listened as one of VMFA-115s aircraft radioed-in to report a problem. The aircraft had been hit by enemy ground fire and could not lower its landing gear. The pilot was going to attempt a belly landing on the runway. At that news, we all raced outside near the runway to grab a good spot from which to watch the crash landing.

Crash crews raced to cover the runway with a layer of fire retardant foam while the damaged F4 circled overhead, burning down its load of fuel. Two arresting cables were strung across the middle of the runway. The cables were anchored on each end by a chain made with heavy, 40-pound links. The plan was for the F4 to lower his tail hook, to belly-land in the foam, to catch one of the arresting wires, and to come to a screeching halt. It did not quite happen that way.

After burning off most of his fuel, the pilot gingerly lowered the airplane onto the foamed runway. A spark set off the fumes in the jet's empty wing tanks and they erupted into flames. All one could see racing down the runway were two wingtips protruding from an orange and black ball of fire heading toward the arresting cables.

The F4 hit the first arresting cable. We watched the cable snap and hurl its 40-pound chain links skyward. Then the plane hit the second arresting cable. It also parted and flung its chain links. The aircraft was now just a ball of fire heading toward the end of the runway.

Then we heard, Boom! Boom! The pilot had lit his afterburners. He was attempting to take-off without wheels! As the aircraft roared toward the end of the runway, it slowly struggled skyward. It got airborne and began to climb nearly vertically. Then, both the pilot and his backseater, the radar intercept officer (RIO), ejected.

We stared in wonder as the aircraft crashed into the nearby ocean.? The two crewmen slowly floated down in their parachutes. The

wind carried them over the ocean and they too soon splashed down.

A rescue helicopter was on the scene immediately. Both of the F4 crewmen, treading water, raised their right hand. This was a signal to the chopper that they were unharmed. The helicopter slowly lowered itself and plucked the pilot out of the water and into the safety of the helicopter. The helicopter then turned its attention to the RIO. As the helicopter slowly lowered itself over the RIO, the helicopter pilot suddenly lost control of his chopper, and he crashed into the water atop the RIO. As soon as the chopper hit the water, its pilot regained control, got airborne again, and yanked the RIO from the water. Although the RIO was rescued safely, his leg was broken when the helicopter crashed atop him.

That night at the Officers Club, the RIO sat with his leg elevated and encased in a full-leg cast. As he imbibed a few, he related his story:

"First, we got the daylight shot out of us. But, hey, that okay. We weren't hurt. Then, we survived a belly landing. But, that was okay too. We weren't hurt. Then the pilot decided he'd take off without wheels, but that worked out well too. Then we survived an ejection and a water landing, but that was also okay. We weren't hurt? Then the damn rescue helicopter crashed on me and broke my leg!"

Blue Skies & Tailwinds...

Chip

MINUTES: GENERAL MEETING EAA CHAPTER 663, 4/6/2017, 7:35 PM, MEETING ROOM OF FIVE RIVERS AVIATION, AT KLVK

Chapter president John Goldsmith called the meeting to order.

No guests introduced themselves. There were only about 20 members present mostly due to bad weather believe it or not.

The minutes were approved as presented in "The Grapevine".

Treasurer Mark Palajac, not present, passed on to John that the membership stands at 66. The chapter balance amounts to \$6,785.86. A voice was heard raising the total to 67 members.

Young Eagles Coordinator Trina Anderson announced that the first rally scheduled for this Saturday, 4/8, may be canceled due to weather. Volunteers would get final notice by email.

Eagle Flight: In the absence of John Youngblood, Trystyn Clark reported that another prospect has come forward. The program is slowly coming together.

Business: Tool man Bob Farnam reported that the chapter now has a bead breaker.

Chapter website: Several members reported not being able to log onto the "members only" part of the website. Brad Oliver was not present, but Trystyn Clark has been in contact with Brad and changes, very very good changes will be coming to the site soon.

Announcements: The next board meeting will be on April 20th, with the next general meeting following on May 4th. The first barbeque of the year will be on May 13th. The northern California dealer for Sea Ray, Tom Binseld will be bringing a Sea Ray for show and tell.

John showed the Mail Bag on the screen; The TV is now working flawlessly (yeh).

Ralph Cloud filled us in on the latest from airport management. There is continued concern about airport vehicle access. The problem continues to be vehicles crossing into the tower controlled aircraft operating areas. All drivers including guests are supposed to complete the online guide. Here is the link: http://www.cityoflivermore.net/citygov/pw/public_works_divisions/airport/ground_vehicle_driver_orientation/default.htm

There may yet be a tenant for that part of the admin building intended to be a restaurant. Do not hold your breath.

The old terminal building will come down when it comes down. Again do not hold your breath.

Trystyn mentioned that Dave Dent will be in the area, and a barbeque lunch is planned for the 22nd at Dave's old hangar.

Break and then Program: In lieu of a speaker we watch two EAA supplied "chapter only videos". The first was about our effort to put a man on the moon, the Apollo Program. The second concerned techniques for TIG welding tubes joining at acute angles. Both were very interesting.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Bruce Cruikshank, for Secretary Kirk Knight.

Feedback/Questions/Suggestions

Any and all feedback is welcome. Please take a few minutes to send suggestions, tips, corrections or any other feedback to: Trystyn1271@gmail.com

Cool videos found on the internet.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KiF5MTtpWjI>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xb85Yg3pOdY>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jytX_cpXEc

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LYchXyOWSmY>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UK_4kgap6EM



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