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ANA Squadron 40

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Pres: [Scott Hornung](#)

VP: [Roger Lerseth](#)

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## June 12, Luncheon: VAL-4 [Black Ponies](#), Capt Gil Winans, USN (Ret.)



Gil Winans will present his recollections as the first commanding officer of VAL-4, the OV-10A *Bronco* squadron established in 1969 to support “brown water” forces throughout the Mekong Delta. Gil was designated as a naval aviator in 1953 and was a highly respected, Vietnam experienced, A-1 *Spad* pilot -- perfect for selection as the first leader of the *Black Ponies*. We look forward to fellow ANA Whidbey member, Gil Winans' presentation on his unique experiences as *Black Ponies* CO and OV-10 pilot.

## May 8 Luncheon: *Olympic Squadron*, Capt John Payne USN (Ret.)



On Tuesday, 8 May, the Whidbey O'Club definitely drew a full house as our compatriots from the Olympic Squadron made the long journey across the Sound for one of our periodic joint meetings. The house was rocking to the sounds of over 75 ANA members, honored guests and representatives of the various NAS Whidbey Island commands and communities.

The festivities commenced with welcoming remarks by president/skipper Scott Hornung and then segued into the traditional monthly Sierra Hotel intelligence brief, this time provided by VP-40 Bull Ensign Mike Hubbard. Afterwards came an outstanding presentation by Olympic skipper Capt. John Payne, USNA '67, career fighter pilot with time in TF-9Js, F-4s and F-14s, former CO of the *Black Lions* of VF-213 and former commanding officer of USS *Sacramento* (AOE-1) and USS *Carl Vinson* (CVN-70).

He started off by describing the differences between commanding a super carrier and an ANA squadron; on the carrier, the audience has nowhere to go, while ANA members can leave a presentation at any time. Capt. Payne noted he was watching the door and pointed out it was rude to walk out on your own CO (nobody left!). He then took everyone on a cruise down memory lane, invoking classic words and phrases such as “Sasebo Sojourn,” “Bonca Boat” and “Night Train to Nairobi.”

The captain covered several career highlights, describing a training command path that took him from VT-1 at Saufley Field to Meridian, back to Pensacola and then to NAS Chase Field, where he racked up “1000 hours in the F-9 and never left Texas.” He added he had a lot of strong memories of the training variant of the *Cougar*, stating it was “not overpowered but it did make a lot of noise.” The comment brought an understanding roar of laughter from the other TF-9J survivors in the crowd.

Capt. Payne's other comments - on the joys of hydraulic catapults, liberty call in some exotic port and the like - eventually had the crowd laughing so hard it brought tears to several eyes. He finished with a summary of leadership rules from his tours as commanding officer, commenting, “I enjoyed my 30 years of Navy life. I'm sure there were some down spots, but I can't remember them now.” The two squadrons responded with thunderous applause which brought the curious out of the adjacent dining room. Afterwards the Olympic crowd headed to the flight line for a tour of a *Fighting Marlin* P-3C.

All in all, everyone had a great time and as always it was fun to swap “there I was” stories with our buds from across the pond. The squadron thanks all of the participants for making the joint meeting possible, with particular Bravo Zulu to Capt. Payne and Cmdr. Clyde Porter and the personnel of VP-40.

- Ranger Mark

**LIFTING THE FOG OF WAR** by Admiral Bill Owens with Ed Offley; Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2000, 288 pages.



Bill Owens stellar military career commenced at the Naval Academy with the Class of '62 and culminated with retirement in 1996, from his position as Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, a military ranking in our system second only to the Chairman of the JCS. Initially he sparkled as a star in the Rickover nuclear submarine constellation. Arguably one of the most cerebral flag officers of the last century, Owens became an Oxford CNO Scholar in 1970, and in 1980 helped form the first Strategic Studies Group at the Naval War College. He went on to command Sixth Fleet during the Gulf War and then became DCNO for Navy Program Planning in 1992. In 1994 he was selected to command PACFLT and had already left DC and taken up residence with his family in Hawaii only to be recalled to the Pentagon for the VCJCS position. He was obviously chosen for his mix of intellectual brilliance and “Purple Suit” credentials.

Clausewitz wrote “War is the realm of uncertainty; three quarters of the factors on which action is based are wrapped in a fog of greater or lesser uncertainty.” A thought confirmed by virtually all creditable writers, reporters and thinkers in the area of military affairs. Owens documents many of the causes and consequences both historically and currently, of commander’s inability to achieve clear awareness of the battlefield situation. Then citing US leadership in technology, economics, education, training and weaponry he explains how we can permanently lift the “fog of war” for US troops and the dire consequences if we do not.

Owens advocates a total Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) to propel the Department of Defense and all four combat arms from the Industrial Age to the Information age and a new era where we can take advantage of the synergy of “Jointness.” We would do this through incorporation of a system of systems. The US could be virtually invincible in battle. The technology is at hand, it is less expensive than continuing to procure obsolete cold war weaponry and the only thing lacking is the will. There’s the rub. Achieving a true and complete RMA will necessitate complete cultural makeovers for all four services and everyone in DOD. Many oxen would be gored, many fiefdoms destroyed, much legislative pork uncooked. Change is painful, maybe too painful

This is an interesting, very readable book and much of what Owens advocates make eminent good sense. We thought this would be a good time to take a look at it, what with Secretary Rumsfeld and staff deeply and secretly engrossed in the Quadrennial Review. The Navy has already fired the first shot across the bow with its announced plan to outfit all battle groups with “Cooperative Engagement Technology” (CEC) starting next year. Let’s hope it can be integrated into a system of systems..

*Reviewed by Cdr. George G. Fisher, USN (ret)*

### **Web Site Reminder:**

Links to related material can be found on our web site at <http://www.ANAWhidbey.org>



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