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ANA Squadron 40

April 2001

Pres: [Scott Hornung](#)

VP: [Roger Lerseth](#)

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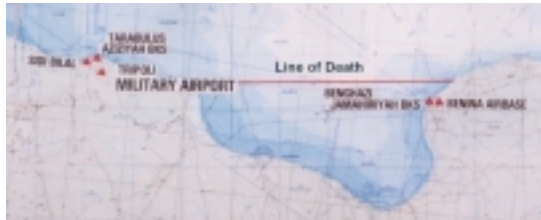
Upcoming Events

April 10, 2001 -- Monthly luncheon (1130–1300); *El Dorado Canyon* Strikes (1986)

May 8, 2001 -- Monthly luncheon (1130–1300); CAPT John Payne, Olympic Squadron

May 24-26, 2001 – [ANA National Convention](#), San Diego CA; RADM Smith, ANA Pres.

April 10 Luncheon: *El Dorado Canyon*: CDR Scott Hornung USN (Ret.)



Before there was Saddam there was Moammar. Before there was *Desert Storm* there was *El Dorado Canyon* – the battle against international terrorism. CDR Scott Hornung, USN (Ret.) will commemorate the 15th anniversary of Operation *El Dorado Canyon* with a presentation on the subject. The

presentation will include VAQ-135's no-notice, New Years Day, 1986 deployment to the USS Coral Sea (CVA-43) and the Gulf of Sidra – defying Moammar Gadhafi's *Line of Death* and supporting strikes against Libya on April 15th 1986.

March 13 Luncheon: In case you missed the March two-fer:

We had the great fortune of snaring two of our resident squadron COs, **CDR Tim Miller** of VR-61, and **CDR Bernie Ryan** of VP-40 to share the dais for the March luncheon. CDR Miller focused his comments on the advent of the C-40 (AKA: 737) as replacement for the aging fleet of C-9s that have until now provided the bulk of the Navy's long range/heavy lift requirements. Tim pointed out the many improvements the C-40 brings to the fleet: impressive improvements in range and payload, and noteworthy reductions in aircraft down time and maintenance hours lead a list very legitimate reasons why the Navy needs this aircraft now. He also pointed out why it would be smart to make NAS Whidbey the next VR base to acquire the airplane. He used some very real examples of what its introduction means in support for our 18 deploying squadrons, the ability to support the aircraft without major changes to facilities, and to the local industry (Boeing), that produces the aircraft. He added the very valid, though oft overlooked, fact that many of his squadron's reserve maintenance people are Boeing mechanics who work on the 737 in their civilian lives. In sum, he made an impressive argument for accelerated introduction of the C-40 here at Whidbey.

CDR Ryan followed with what was billed as a deployment debrief for the Fighting Marlins, recently returned from their deployment to the Indian Ocean and Westpac. Bernie opened with a brief description of his aircraft's capabilities, which proved important to those unfamiliar with the P-3, when he began to describe the wide variety of VP-40 taskings on that deployment. Sub hunting/tracking often took second fiddle to other missions which took advantage of the P-3's broad spectrum of systems, exceptional range and loiter time. The wide range of taskings, and the extremely short notice that often accompany them, was made strikingly apparent when the **U.S.S. COLE** was hit by a terrorist bomb in Yemen. Within hours, VP-40 P-3s were airborne in support. Three squadron aircraft were the first U.S. assets on scene to provide assistance to COLE in whatever way they could, and carrying U.S. Marines to provide security for the ship. As CDR Ryan pointed out, VP-40 became VR-40 in the initial stages of that tragedy. It was clear from his words that the men and women of the Fighting

Marlins should be proud not only of an eminently successful deployment, but for being there in numbers when COLE needed them most. BZ, Marlins!

The *Fighting Marlins* also were well represented at the luncheon. Whether that was because they wanted to make sure the skipper got it right in his talk, or to learn more about the C-40, or to enjoy a lunch with ANA at the club remains to be seen. In any event, we were pleased to have them join us. That welcome mat is out always, so come back soon and often. The rest of us should seriously consider what both skippers had to say, and to reflect on the C-40 and what it means to us here at Whidbey and to the Navy in general. As it turns out, CDR Ryan's next set of orders will be to the Pentagon, where he will have the P-3 Requirements Desk. Among the options being considered for a follow-on to the P-3 is...yup, a 737 derivative. These two skippers, and their squadrons, may have a lot in common in the future, and that future may have a great deal to do with one of our primary NW industries. It could be, with some nudging in the right places that such commonality may work to the betterment of both our Navy and our host community. Something to think about.

Some High Points: ANA Whidbey have the privilege to contribute to the annual festivities at NAS that are designed to honor the best in our naval aviation community. Two such events have occurred over the last month:

On 16 March, PATWING TEN honored the best people in its community in an annual awards ceremony. ANA Whidbey sponsors a plaque recognizing the PATWING Aircrewman of the Year. This year's award went to **AD1 Francisco Garcia, Jr.** ANA member CDR David Weisbrod USN (Ret) was on hand to present the plaque. Our sincere congratulations, Petty Officer Garcia, for winning this prestigious award in a very competitive community!

On 07 April, the Naval Air Station held its annual recognition ceremonies at the Chief's Club for those that reflect the best of the best at NAS. ANA Whidbey has the honor of sponsoring the Lester B. Tucker Leadership Excellence Award to the sea and shore CPOs attached to commands at NAS Whidbey that best demonstrate those qualities in the community. This year's awards go to **AGC (AW/SW) Jeffrey A. Potts** of the Naval Pacific Meteorology and Oceanography Facility, Whidbey Island (Sea), and **MSCS (SW) Robert A. Reiner** of the Supply Department, NAS Whidbey Island (Shore). Our hearty congratulations go to both recipients for epitomizing the leadership qualities that award exemplifies.

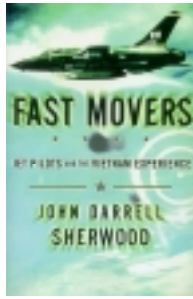
Changes: **VADM Richard "Sweetpea" Allen, USN (Ret.)** stepped down from the office of President of ANA on 28 February, passing the controls to **RADM Phillip "P.D." Smith, USN (Ret.)**. Admiral Smith is a former maritime patrol pilot with an extensive background in VP operations, Navy Plans and Policy (OP-06), and political-military planning and strategy. Following retirement from active service he worked with Lockheed Martin, first as a consultant, then as Directors of Near East Business Development and finally as Director of Maritime Requirements until December 2000. We welcome the new "boss" aboard, and wish Admiral Allen the very best in his future endeavors.

Losses: The naval aviation community and the PBY Memorial Association lost a special one when **CAPT. Gene Guthrie, USNR (Ret.)** died on the 13th of March. Many here knew Capt. Guthrie as an avid naval aviation supporter and a charter member of the PBYMA at Whidbey. Remembrances may be made to the PBYMA, PO Box 941, Oak Harbor, WA. 98277.

On the Horizon: **CAPT. John Payne, USN (Ret.)**, CO of the ANA Olympic Squadron will be our guest speaker for May, and may bring a good portion of his squadron with him.

Association of Naval Aviation 2001 Annual Convention (ANA 2001) will be held May 24 - 26, 2001 at the Sheraton Hotel Harbor Island, San Diego, California. Make arrangements now if you plan to attend.

Book Review:



“FAST MOVERS, Jet Pilots and the Vietnam Experience” by John Darrell Sherwood, Free Press, 1999, is more than a well-documented good read, it is intriguing, at least it should be to those who participated in last century’s fourteen year adventure known as the Air War over Vietnam. Particularly the marquee operations of that adventure known as “Rolling Thunder,” “Commando Hunt,” and “Linebacker” (I & II.) The book has been praised by some of the more well known chronologists of the era including; Barrett Tillman, Mark Berent and Stephan Coonts.

In the course of the war, the United States dropped more than eight million tons of bombs on SE Asia and lost 8,588 fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters. That the US never lost a battle but lost the war due to lack of popular support and the politics in Washington, DC that drove poor decisions regarding targeting, weaponeering and geopolitics is the conventional wisdom. Few, in today’s United States, have a visceral understanding of the inherent personal risks to the actual combatants in warfare. Aviators and aircrew understand these risks and could have easily avoided them. In military aviation the merest hint of reluctance to fly is enough to get one yanked out of the cockpit and put behind a desk without culpability or punishment assigned. So why put oneself in harm’s way? Why face hostile fighter aircraft, SAMs and incredible volumes of AAA? Where if you go down and survive you will be faced by a native population whose only aim is to see you suffer horribly before you die. Why do it once, much less hundreds of times? Sherwood tries to answer these questions by biographical analyses of fourteen “Fast Movers” of the era. In gathering material for these analyses, Sherwood conducted almost three hundred interviews and obviously gathered copious quantities of documentation. He concludes the fast-movers “...participated in the war for the sake of their comrades, their units, the service, and to demonstrate their unique skills in an air-combat environment.” This is certainly valid but hardly original and not peculiar to jet aviators. Authors, historians and tacticians from Shakespeare to Keegan have suggested warriors perform out of loyalty to and in support of, their peers; their messmates, the guy in the next foxhole, their wingman. However it is an important message and Sherwood reiterates it well. It is particularly important today when so few of our national leaders have any first hand military experience.

The principals included in the study are some of the most famous names in recent aviation warfare circles: Robin Olds, Steve Ritchie, Chuck DeBellevue and John “Pirate” Nichols, III. Some whose names are familiar but not as well known: Roger Sheets, Charlie Carr, jr., Roger Locher and Roger Lerseth. Others whose names remain virtually unknown to this day; Ted Sienicki, Jim Latham, Phil Schuyler, Ed Rasimus and Bill Angus. All of these people had two things in common. They conducted air warfare in jet aircraft in the skies over Vietnam, under extremely adverse conditions and they did it with uncommon dedication, selflessness and valor.

In addition to the fourteen principals, the work is peppered with names many will recognize; Bill Harris, Jesse Greer, J.B. Souder, Jim Stockdale, James Salter, Lyle Bull and many more.

John Sherwood is also the author of “Officers in Flight Suits; The Story of Air Force Fighter Pilots in the Korean War.” He holds a Ph.D in History from George Washington University, and is the Official Historian of the United States Naval Historical Center, where he is writing the history of Naval Air Power in Southeast Asia.

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

Web Site Reminder:

As usual, late-breaking information and links to related material can be found on our web site at <http://www.ANAWhidbey.org>