



(Continued from page 13)

ADAMS
ADAM SWYGERT SON OF STEWART SWYGERT

RAYTHEON MISSILE DIVISION \$ 2,000.00
KWANINIQUE BRANDON SON OF
KENNETH BRANDON
ALYSSA PETRONGELLI DAUGHTER OF
JAMES PETRONGELLI

Please join me in congratulating our two board of directors who were selected this year; CWO4, Retired, Rob Walecki and CDR, Retired, Jeff Sassone. Welcome aboard to the Board of Directors. We should all give a big thank to Mr. Kirk Brado for stepping up to replace Jim Thomas as our events coordinator. This is a monumental task and Jim has done an outstanding job for us all these years. Additionally, Mr. Tom Lord was voted in as the association treasurer and will be taking the huge job of keeping the finances in order. Accounting is a tough job and JJ has done it with distinction. Tom, we wish you the best and thank you for stepping up to what is probably the hardest job in the association. JJ, once again, thank you for all you've given to the association and each of us.

Membership is down slightly, but with your help, the members, we should bounce right back. I would like to thank all the Chapter personnel once again who are responsible for a great year of recruiting. Now to get the rest of the leadership motivated!! I would like to ask the membership if they know of anyone who has dropped their membership please try to get those individuals back in the Association. We still see hundreds of past members we don't have a current address for, so if they transferred and you know, them, remind them to update their address please. Please if you move let the Treasure know what your new address is!!!!

As the nomination committee Chair I will be accepting nominations for the following positions for next years elections; President, (Capt Dave Lepard); two Board of Directors (Gerald Gladders and Rick Garza). If you have a nomination for any of these positions, the formal nominations must be received by me on or before 01 June 2012. Letters of nominations will be posted in the Red Shirt prior to the convention.

Ever onward,
Michael K. Price

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and every day. if you don't know what I'm talking about ASK the GUNNY and CHIEF!!!! Nuff said...

I'll close for this edition, please have a wonderful upcoming holiday season, Thanksgiving and Christmas and New Year's. Be safe and start your planning to attend the 2012 Convention and Symposium. Pat misses you all and promises that she will be in attendance in 2012. Keep her in your thoughts and prayers.. Keep me in your thoughts as well as she will be going full blast and fully recovered from surgery.

Warm Regards..
Your President,
CAPT Dave Lepard

A letter to the editor.

The Ordies of CVN-77 and CVW-8 are bidding a heartfelt farewell to one of our own. CWO4 Kevin "Gunner" Marks will depart the pattern in a few days marking the beginning of the end of a 30 year Naval career. Kevin is an AO's AO! His leadership, professionalism, and love of our game will surely be missed. No redshit "cruises" the flight deck like Kevin. Please share with our brother and sisters as we congratulate a great American and say "see ya later" to a true friend.

"ALL THE BEST
Vr/ LCDR Dave Fowler,
OHO, GHWB, DEPLOYED



CWO4 Kevin Marks, LCDR Dave Fowler





2012 SYMPOSIUM / CONVENTION PLANNING MEETINGS IN LAUGHLIN, NV.

January 12-16, 2012

AQUARIUS HOTEL

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or

www.theaquarius.com

Ask for: Group Code "C-AAO12"

Sun - Thu @ \$30.00 Fri & Sat @ \$59.00

(Rates are good 10-18 January)

(No changes to reservation within 72-hours of arrival)

Meetings are held to discuss ideas & plans for the 2012 Symposium and Convention.

Everyone Is Welcome!

Symposium meeting will be held on Friday, January 13 @ 1400.

Convention meeting will be Saturday, January 14 @ 0900.

**** Meetings are in the Majestic Suite ****

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"I told him I didn't want any money, that I had just wanted a Model 1911," Berry said.

Turns out that McGinty had a completely original Colt 1911 manufactured in 1918 that had been owned by John Finn, a longtime friend. Out of gratitude for having received his pistol back, he sent the Finn pistol to Medford for Berry to pick up last week.

"Can't thank you enough for your kindness," read a July 24 note accompanying the weapon. "I have enclosed some cards and a (Medal of Honor) challenge coin. The John W. Finn card was printed on the occasion of his 100th birthday. John passed away last year. Thank you again, George."

With his signature, McGinty, who could not be reached for comment by the Mail Tribune, added "Semper fi."

Finn, who died in the spring of 2010 at age 100, was the last survivor of the 15 Navy sailors who received the Medal of Honor for heroism during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. Wounded nine times, Finn, who acquired the pistol during the war, was the oldest living re-

ipient of the medal.

"I am absolutely deliriously happy it turned out this way," Berry said.

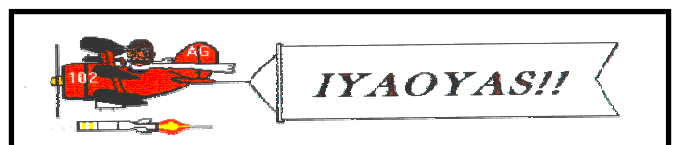
With the Finn pistol he finally acquired a Model 1911 Colt, but he will tell you that's not the point.

"John McGinty could have just said, 'Thanks, have a good life,' " Berry said. "But no matter what was going to happen, I knew I would feel good about getting that gun back to him.

"Concern yourself with what is right and you'll never second-guess that decision," he concluded.

Berry and his wife, Lilliana, plan to visit McGinty later this year.

Reach reporter Paul Fattig at 541-776-4496 or email him at pfattig@mailtribune.com.





***DOUGLAS A-3D SKYWARRIOR
RESTORATION – FROM AIRPORT EYESORE
TO AIRPORT PRIDE
BY DEL MITCHELL AOC (Ret)***

The Mojave Desert of southern California can be a very foreboding place during any time of the year, from the extreme dry heat of the summer months, to the cold windy days of winter, it is anything but Mediterranean in climate and temperature. But, it is also here in this environment that Edwards Air Force Base, and the Air Force Flight Test Center (AFFTC) calls home, and during its tenure as one of America's premier test facilities, many of the greatest aircraft, past and present, have been tested, evaluated, and developed. But AFFTC isn't just about flight testing, for over the years many of the systems and adaptations that have been developed and incorporated into current day aircraft had their origins here. For instance, back in the 1960's, the Air Force was concerned about how to slow or stop their aircraft when there was a malfunction to their landing systems, i.e., flaps, landing gear, brakes, etc. The Air Force borrowed a concept developed by the Navy that involved nylon netting set up as a series of barriers on aircraft carriers for aircraft in trouble when landing, but they needed an aircraft to help them with experiments to test this concept at land based facilities. So, the Air Force looked to the boneyard at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base in Tucson, AZ for a likely candidate, and found a retired Douglas A-3D1 Skywarrior.

Douglas A-3D1 Skywarrior, Navy BuNo 135434, (s/n 10327) was delivered to the Navy in November 1955, and shortly after its acceptance, it was assigned to Operation Redwing in 1956, a series of 17 nuclear tests conducted at Kwajalein Atoll, Eniwetok Atoll, and Bikini Atoll in the South Pacific. Of the 17 tests conducted, 135434 participated in seven, where the scope of the tests evaluated the A-3's special weapons delivery system, as well as instrumentation to record thermal radiation, blast, and gamma ray data. After completion of the tests, 135434 returned to the United States where it was assigned to Navy squadrons VAH-3 and VAH-9 at NAS Sanford, Florida. While assigned to these squadrons, 135434 participated in several deployments with various Carrier Air Wing Groups (CAWG) to the Mediterranean before being assigned in the early 1960's to the Naval Air Test Center (NATC), Patuxent River, Maryland, where it was used for barrier/arrested landings, and JATO tests. During one of the JATO tests the speed brakes were accidentally actuated causing extensive damage to the aft portion of the fuselage, and although repaired with thick aluminum riveted to the fuselage, the aircraft was flown to Lichfield Park, Arizona for disposition. When Congress mandated in 1966 only one aircraft storage facility as a cost cutting measure, and designated Davis-Monthan Air Force Base as the storage

area for all military aircraft, the Navy closed Lichfield Park and moved all their aircraft to that facility, including 135434. It is here that the Air Force retrieved it for their barrier tests to be conducted at Edwards Air Force Base in the mid 1960's. 135434 was taken out of mothballs, serviced, then flown to Edwards for the impending barrier tests. After arrival, 135434 was modified with heavy aluminum weights, three on each wing, to keep the aircraft from becoming airborne during the tests, and she never flew again. After the barrier tests, the aircraft was declared surplus by the Navy in June 1967, then towed to various locations on the base before finally being abandoned on an unused runway where it sat until the restoration effort began in January 2010 by a group of retired Navy enlisted aviators.

Retired Navy Master Chief, Mike Glenn, is one of those profound individuals who does not take no for an answer, nor does he let things get in his way, especially when it comes to Douglas A-3's. As a former Navy mechanic during his active duty years working on A-3's, and then as an employee with Hughes Aircraft (now Raytheon Corp), who maintained a fleet of A-3's doing contract work for the Navy, and as a flight engineer with the naval reserve in Patrol Squadron 65 (VP-65) out of NAS Pt. Mugu, CA, and Patrol Squadron 91 (VP-91) out of NAS Moffett Field, CA, Master Chief Glenn knows how to get things done, and he knows how to massage the bureaucratic military system, whether it's orthodox or not. And so, when he found out Edwards Air Force Base had an abandoned Skywarrior on the base, he immediately contacted the Edwards Museum Foundation, and its director, Mr. Fredrick Johnsen, about restoring the airplane. With the blessings of the Museum, Master Chief Glenn began contacting former squadron mates, and other retired A-3 Navy friends to see if they would be interested in the restoration of 135434. In January 2010, a small group of volunteers assembled at the Edwards Museum to begin the task of putting things together to retrieve 135434 from its isolated confines, and, begin the process of restoration, and hopefully, culminate for the Centennial of Naval Aviation in November of 2011. After a cursory inspection of 135434 at its windswept parking space, it was becoming abundantly clear that a lot of hard work was in store for the volunteers, for the harshness of the desert environment, although minimizing corrosion, had definitely taken its toll on plexiglass, control surface hinges, cockpit, radome, bomb bay, aft gun turret, main mount struts, nose gear strut, tires, wheel bearings, and paint. In other words, a huge mess awaited the impending restoration process, but perseverance and skill sets, under adverse situations, is what makes challenges common place for these veterans. Once 135434 was raised from the crumbled asphalt, and new wheel bearings and tires put in place, a two mile tow to the protective confines of a covered hangar was initiated. 135434 was now protected

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from the harshness of the Mojave Desert for the first time in over 40 years, and the next phase of its rejuvenation would begin in earnest in February 2010.

The February and March restoration sessions was more of an assessment evaluation, and most of the time was spent getting parts together, outlining work priorities, assembling reference manuals, establishing areas within the hangar to work in, coordinating with various Air Force work centers on Edwards for support, assignment of GSE & MHE, moving parts from the Raytheon hangar at Mojave Airport to Hangar 1210 at Edwards, procuring materials and hand tools, and overall, doing minor repairs. The April session involved removing the cockpit instrument panels, seats, hatches, and avionics for cleaning and restoration. Meanwhile, two former Navy Aviation Ordnancemen, and identical twin brothers, Delbert and Delwynn Mitchell, concentrated on the bomb bay and aft gun turret as their areas of the restoration project. After four decades of sitting neglected, all the desert creatures of the Mojave that could crawl, fly, walk, or slither had found a safe and secure nesting and resting area in the bomb bay and gun turret. Years of rodent nests and feces had literally packed the insides of the bomb bay doors, necessitating the drilling of oversized holes in the door ends to remove large quantities of dead vegetation. Pete Nowicki and Art Hernandez concentrated on the cockpit, replacing and cleaning gauges, and rejuvenating the dash area, to include the center console and throttles. Bill Grant and Andy Barbre used their skills as metalmiths to replace and repair corroded aluminum, and to fabricate patches on torn nacelles and cowlings. Ty Wilcox, and his older brother Dennis concentrated their skills on repairing the cockpit plexiglass and frame, as well as fuselage sanding, engine repairs, and hydraulics. Dennis Lundin also used his talents on the cockpit glass, radome, avionics, and hydraulics. Steve Allyn, John Klepp, and Clark Warren helped in sanding the worn out paint, as well as assisting with the bomb bay and gun turret, and with the cockpit.

In May, 135434 got its first bath in over 40 years. Over six hours was dedicated to thoroughly washing the plane inside and out, top to bottom. It took over two hours just to clean the rodent nests and feces from the bomb bay doors. The once pristine gray and white paint scheme had now dissolved into a river of white, chalky residue as the water and soap carried it to the wash rack drains. Years of leaking hydraulic fluid that had dried on the bomb bay doors, wings, and fuselage underbelly, was now being scoured with abrasive to release their caustic hold from their surfaces. Slowly and aggressively, but with affection and respect, 135434 was being prepped from airport eyesore to airport eye pleaser.

As the months progressed after 135434's washing, a lot of work was accomplished. The J-57 engines were removed

from their pods and thoroughly washed inside and out, then reinstalled. A new antenna cap was installed on the vertical stabilizer, the cockpit glass was removed, and new or repaired glass installed and sealed, corroded metal removed and repaired on the fuselage, ATM's installed, gun turret repaired to move in azimuth and elevation, entire fuselage, wings, and empennage sanded in preparation for painting, new top escape hatch installed, radome installed, cockpit instruments reinstalled, center console rebuilt and reinstalled, and many other accomplishments that literally transformed the aircraft from what it had been in January of 2010. January 2011, a new year for 135434, and she is in the final stages that will lead to a new paint scheme. Final sanding of the fuselage, wings, and empennage area is preparing the metal for eventual painting. During this work session, the wings are unfolded to their flight position, detail work with the cockpit instruments is being finalized, and the cockpit glass is finished and sealed. In February and March, 135434 is finally finished, and now it's a waiting game with the paint shop at Edwards.

April 2011, 135434, has a date with destiny. After forty years of heat, cold, unmerciful winds, and neglect, 135434, awaits the tow tug that will transfer her from the hangar that has been home for the past 15 months, to the Edwards Paint Shop. As the tug tows 135434 to the Paint Shop, a small group of airmen and civilians on the flight line stop what they are doing, and watch, and probably wonder, what kind of relic is this? It is not within their minds what this relic is, for 135434 is as old if not older than the observers watching her being towed, and they probably don't have a clue that she has been a forgotten guest of the Air Force all these years, and now she is on her way, like the Ugly Duckling, to the paint palace to be transformed into a beautiful swan. How ironic it is for 135434 to have been abandoned for so long, and now as she passes, she is capturing the eyes and attention of an inquisitive audience who neither knows nor understands what she has been through.

An old paint scheme, Sea Blue, reminiscent of the Navy of the late 1940's and early 50's, and the color 135434 left the Douglas factory with in 1955, was meticulously applied to her frame and wings, and after curing, she emerged totally different than when she went in. The marvels of paint, and the transformation or illusion it creates, cannot be underestimated. In 2010, an airport eyesore unworthy of mention, is now in 2011, an example of what a group of old Navy salts can do with a little encouragement, a lot of skill, an abundance of will power, and a desire to see a forgotten icon of a bygone era be restored to her proper place in aviation history. As Master Chief Glenn once said, "if we don't teach our children and grandchildren about these airplanes, then they'll never know what we did, or what part these machines played in our history". I couldn't agree more. On 14

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