

Red Eagles 4th of July, 2013 Newsletter

July 4, 2013
Issue 17

Fellow Red Eagles: The "USN and USMC Guys" in the Red Eagles

This quarter's article is written by Keith Shean. He was assigned to the Red Eagles from January 1980 to April 1982. He retired from the Navy in 1992. He flew the MiG-17 and the MiG-23 aircraft during his time with the Red Eagles. He was subsequently an F-14 squadron commander, the Executive Officer of an aircraft carrier and completed his time in the Navy as a Training Wing Commander. He worked for Cubic Corporation for 20 years after leaving the Navy and is now retired and living in San Diego with his wife Charlotte.

This is an attempt to recall the early operational years (1980-1983), from a Navy and Marine Corps view point, when the 4477 TEF had just gone operational after all the incredibly hard work allowing us to get to that capability. This recollection will not even at-



tempt to name all the inspirational guys that worked tirelessly to make the unit into a full-fledged operational squadron. We all owe them our gratitude and respect.

The "Gold Wing Guys (USN and USMC) were very lucky that the USAF guys were so great at making us feel welcome and showing us the ropes when we arrived. Earl Henderson and Joe Oberle were especially helpful.

The initial cadre of naval aviators made lots of embarrassing mistakes because some procedures were so different between the services. Joe Oberle understood because he had a previous exchange tour with an F-4 squadron at NAS Miramar. His mistakes mirrored ours, but in reverse. Everything from hand signals differences, to the invisible 10 foot wall



Editor's Column:

The 4th of July is upon us and time to celebrate!

- Make plans to celebrate the 4th. Make sure to clean and check the grill. Refill the propane tank or buy enough charcoal.
- When going camping, make a list of all the things you'll need. Don't forget the first aid kit and jumper cables. Let someone know where you are going and when you'll be back.
- Don't forget to fly the flag.
- Enjoy this time with family and friends. Please don't drink and drive or forget to take rest stops while on long road trips.
- You can submit your stories or roster updates by emailing them to: bgalloway5@elpasotel.net or bobbro@bresnan.net or mail to:
Ben Galloway
3732 Bar 10 Road
Calhan, CO 80808



Sel Laughter, Monica (Lenny's girlfriend and I don't remember her last name) Chip Corder, Chuck Corder and Margie Corder. Bottom row: Keith Shean, Lenny Bucko and Mike Scott.



simulated by a red line on the tarmac, to the different radio voice calls bit us in the ass. It got so bad that we started a logbook for all new incoming Gold Wing guys that listed all the gaffs we had made and how to avoid making the same. We filled up a lot of that book.

At the risk of speaking incorrectly for all the USN/USMC pilots and maintenance folks in the Red Eagles, my memories of coming to the USAF as an exchange pilot with the 4477 TEF (later the TES) are of how my entire attitude changed about the USAF. Navy and Marine folks tend to believe that our way is the best way; I experience exactly the opposite in most areas. The USAF proved to me to have the most talented, dedicated and well-trained maintenance personnel I had ever seen. These men worked incredible hours, under harsh conditions and away from their families for the majority of each week. This observation comes not only from working with the best (Red Eagle Maintenance) but also with the guys from the 64th and 65th who maintained the F-5 Aggressors back at Nellis AFB. Without question, the Gold Wing guys had never worked with GCI professionals like the Truck and Bluto. These guys were so good it was like having a GIB in the backseat with a super radar. Our firemen, admin personnel and supply guys were likewise incredible with their professionalism and support. The USAF pilots consistently demonstrated fighter skills that we admired. In short, the USN/USMC members of the squadron finished our Red Eagle tours in awe of our counterparts in the USAF.

Did the USN/USMC members of the 4477TES bring anything new to the Red Eagles? We hope that there were a few positives that we had from our background that may have been picked up and adopted by the squadron in the first 2-3 years of operational training. We would like to think we brought a bit of humor. Did the Gold Wing guys show up for an inspection without rank insignia on our flight suits, no nametags, Nellis BOQ towels substituted for the 57th Wing scarves and no socks; of course we did. I felt sorry for the skipper Tom Gibbs; he didn't deserve the criticism he probably received for that act of defiance, but it was just too much fun to pass up. We came from Navy and Marine squadrons where the maintenance and operations were all together and dependent on each other much like the 4477th TES. We were all trained from the beginning that the squadrons were only as good as the quality aircraft that they maintained and young USN/USMC pilots were immediately assigned to maintenance jobs where we were fortunate to learn from Navy Chief Petty Officers and USMC Sergeants. Certainly we came from backgrounds where a re-enlistment was a somber and honored tradition. Lenny Bucko was the prime instigator at the 4477th to establish this as a tradition. Some may remember Lenny organizing a T-38 ride, a re-enlistment cake, the Marine Corps Hymn and flags for all re-enlistments he performed. You may also remember

that he got dressed in a full Class A USMC uniform, with sword, for the ceremonies. Without going into detail, Lenny's full on the mouth kiss of a crew chief, the invitation by the NAS Miramar Chief Petty Officer organization to come to the new Chief's initiation in San Diego, and the trip to the USS Kitty Hawk for a few Red Eagle pilots and maintainers were other memorable highlights.

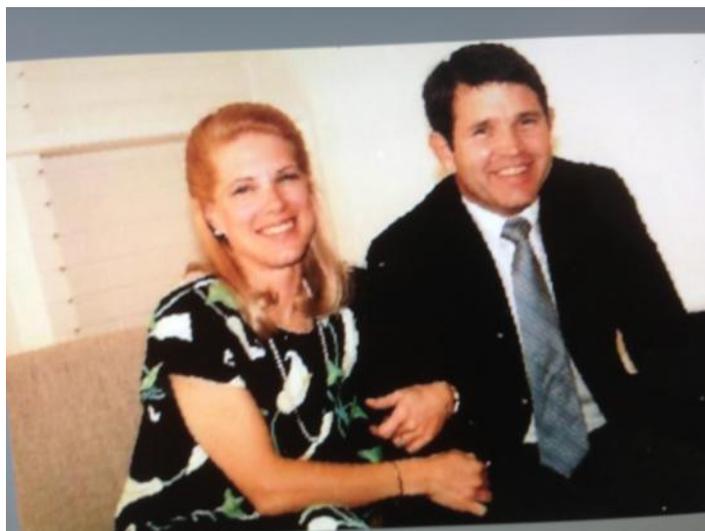
The crew chiefs that put us in the air every day stand out in my mind. They always gave us well-prepared jets that had my utmost trust. Paul Long, Bill McHenry, Billy Maggart, Tom Burzynski, and Mike Beverly were true professionals for whom I had tremendous respect along with the rest of the great maintenance team.

Did the Red Eagles make a difference in the time of their existence; I believe the answer is the strongest possible affirmative. We trained air crews that went into the Gulf War having prepared to go against MiGs and were over the "buck fever" we all had the first time we saw one in a training scenario. All of the squadron was proud of the Gulf of Sidra shoot down in 1981 of two Su-22 aircraft not too long after those two F-14 crews had trained against our Red Eagle MiGs.

In retrospect, I believe the 4477th TES experience was good for all the services represented. We all came away with greater respect for our sister services. We took away the best of what we had learned by working together in the same unit. I will value my time with the Red Eagles and firmly believe we are all better for having left with so many valuable lessons learned.

I cannot sign off without one last salute to Bobby, Hugh Brown (Bandit), Toast, Chuckles, Monroe, and Marshall.

Keith Shean



Keith Shean and his wife Charlotte.



VF-41 Black Aces F-14As shoot down two Libyan Su-22 Fitter-Js

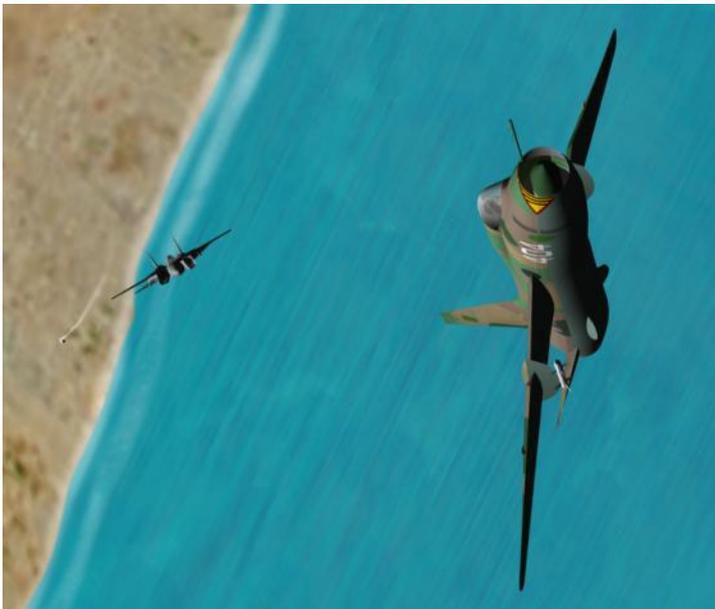
Moammar Gadhafi, leader of Libya, extended the territorial claims over the Medirannean Sea to twelve nautical miles instead of the international accepted 2 miles. Playing the role of the "World Wide Police Force" the US started a challenge against the Libyan leaders' territorial policy: US aircraft carrier battle groups exercised close to the Libyan twelve mile zone while US Navy fighters often entered the Libyan "territorial waters". Often US Navy aircraft were tracked by Libyan radar and Libyan fighter aircraft were launched against US fighter aircraft, heading in their direction and turning away before coming into too short range. But sometimes it came to air combat maneuvering missions between Libyan and US Navy aircraft. The morning of 19 August 1981 began for two patrolling VF-41 F-14As just the same way: Fast Eagle 102 and Fast Eagle 107 were flying Combat Air Patrol (CAP) mission for USS Nimitz (CVN-68) aircraft conducting a missile exercise. A patrolling E-2A Hawkeye made radar contact with two Libyan Sukhoi Su-22 Fitters which had taken off from the former Wheelus Air Force Base near Tripoli and were now heading towards the VF-41 F-14s. As the Fitters were closing in on the Tomcats, the lead Su-22 pilot fired an AA-2 Atoll air-to-air missile at the F-14s. The missile failed, the Su-22s were declared hostile and the Tomcats were cleared to engage. The lead F-14 went for the Fitter wingman while the other went for the Su-22 leader. Soon thereafter, when the Su-22 turned clear of the sun of the lead F-14 pilot got a lock-on with an AIM-9 Sidewinder missile and fired, hitting the Su-22's tailpipe. The Libyan pilot ejected successfully from his burning Fitter. Meanwhile, the second F-14 fired on his lead Fitter at very close range an AIM-9 air-to-air missile and destroyed the Su-22. The F-14 and its crew had proven itself superior to the Su-22s.

"Navy Two, Libya Zero"



Grumman F-14A "Tomcat"
F-14A-80-CR BuAerNo 10403 AD07 "Fast Eagle 107"
Fighter Squadron FOUR ONE - VF-41 "Black Aces"
USS Nimitz (CVN-68), August 1981

On the early morning of 19 August 1981, Forward and Second Carrier Battle Groups were ordered to conduct a second day of missile firing exercises in central Mediterranean, some 50 miles north of Benghazi. As routine, most of these fighters were directed against two pairs of F-14As from VF-41, "Fast Eagle 102" and "Fast Eagle 107", the latter flown by Lt. Larry "Blaze" Macready and Lt. James Anderson. As the distance dropped to eight miles, the Libyan fighters were recognized as two Su-22 "Fitter" light bombers, and the "Blaze" began what was expected to become a routine interception. Broadly speaking, the 800-G "Blaze" of "Fast Eagle 107" was down in three seconds and then left with only a single warning "Submarine" and "Down gun for self-defense" (ASAS) previously developed problems with "Submarine" and "Down gun" were not appropriate. While "Fast Eagle 107" was closing on Libya's lead on Lt. Macready, some 1,000 ft to his right, received a hard left turn that was to place him behind the Libyans, pulling "2" to close down. As he was passing high over the Libyan formation, a brilliant flash followed by a smoke trail appeared under the lead Libyan, as the pilot fired an AA-2 "Atoll" air-to-air missile at "Fast Eagle 107". The missile passed safely underneath the "Tomcat", 500 feet behind the leading F-14 from Sudan. Lt. Macready reacted positively to fire. As the Su-22 in front of him rotated a hard turn to the left, the pilot of "Fast Eagle 107" fired the only AIM-9 "Sidewinder". The missile impacted straight ahead, but then cut the corner and struck the Libyan fighter in the tailpipe, causing massive explosions. Burning the neck area high, Lt. Macready's F-14 (2) had not yet turned to avoid Libya. He saw the Libyan pilot opening his seat ejection from "Explosion" as "Fast Eagle 107" and with his heading corrected to the tail, the "Tomcat" (ASAS) closed with VF-41 for several minutes, and only in his quarters with VF-154, in the last 1980s.



Artist's depiction of *Fast Eagle 107's* AIM-9 Sidewinder about to hit a Libyan Su-22.



Libyan Sukhoi Su-22 Fitter



Red Eagles Alumni Association October Election

The Red Eagles Alumni Association (REAA) will have an election in October to fill three board member positions. The nomination period is still open for REAA members to nominate people for these three positions. So far we have three nominations that will be on the ballot, members are encouraged to nominate more members of the alumni for the board. Attached is a current list of alumni members to choose from. Be sure to check with anyone you want nominate to ensure they will serve if elected. Send nominations to Jim Bluto Keys at jkeys@keysearch.net.

Regards,

Jim "Bluto" Keys

Life Membership

Bohman, Joe
Boudreau, Dave
Chitwood, Eddie
Crawley, Ike
Deatline, Michael
Deitz, Kermit
Galloway, Ben Editor
Gibeault, Bob
Heatherly, Colin
Karnes, Tommy
Larson, DA
Mason, Larry
Nelson, John
Oberle, Joe
O'Connor Jr, Stanley
Peck, Gail Historian
Peterson, Jeff
Press, Mike
Rieger, RD
Robb, James
Scott, Mike President
Shervanick, Larry
Warren, David
Williams, Mike
Zettel, Rob

Yearly or going for Life Membership

Bailey, Kevin
Bell, James

Black, Matthew
Breault, Bob Asst Editor
Burdick, Omer
Christoff, Al
Coshatt, Daniel
Dix, Richard
Drake, Tom
Gallegos, Michael
Geisler, Frank
Henderson, Earl
Henderson, Neil
Hill, Ron
Holland, John
Holtsclaw, Jay
Iverson, Ron
Keys, Jim
Manclark, Jack
Mayberry, George
McMurtrie, Rodney
Melson, Doug
Murphy, Rich
Neal, John B.
Robinson, Doug
Schneider, Ralph
Shumock, Dennis
Sundell, Smokey
Wilborn, EH
Wright, Neena

The Red Eagles Store

We now have the Red Eagle Lapel Pins available and ready for sale. Seen below when compared to a dime. Price will be \$7.00 each. Price includes shipping and handling.



The Red Eagles coin is still available and the purchase includes our squadron commemorative sticker as seen below. The cost is \$7.00 each and includes shipping and handling.



Coin front and obverse

Squadron Sticker

Please send check or money order made out to the Red Eagles Alumni Association or REAA and enclose a note with the name of the item you want and where to send it. Send to:

Phil Young
1449 Drakewood Ave.
N. Las Vegas, NV. 89031

Phil Young

Red Eagles Web Site

Just a reminder that the Red Eagles have their own web site now. You can view a brief history, view our photos and read all the past newsletters. Suggestions are always welcome and if you have photos you would like to share on our web site, please send them to the contact email address on the web site. Visit us at:

<http://www.4477reaa.com/>

