ON TARGET - ON TIME

- The Last Low-Level A-6 Night Combat Missions
- Captured A-6 Crew
- VMA (AW)-224 Combat Operations in Desert Storm

www.intruderassociation.org
Dear Fellow Intruders,

A busy year indeed, with two potential Intruder Tribute installation/dedications, a Reunion, and some great recognition in HOOK magazine. There is no other aircraft community with such a mature presence, although many other groups such as Skyhawks, Phantoms, and Crusaders do occasionally come into view. Most of you are also aware that both the Prowler and Corsair communities have been getting our assistance to bootstrap their own community of alumni, and several conversations with Tomcat folks have been in a similar vein. That speaks well of our Association, and yet we seek no praise – just that these other communities find success in their goals.

We have two topics which I think need greater emphasis, and I personally accept the blame for slow progress. TOPIC ONE, our website has a section labelled, “A-6s In Action”. It contains folders for various combat periods, but has not gotten the content we need to build it out. Many of you could offer some stories and pictures to share with us, and a modest number of such content offers can springboard us forward enough for now! God Bless Our Intruder Family!

From the Vice President
By Bob Braithwaite

Intruder Association Financials

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Windscreen Staff

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Intruders: I hope everyone who attended the San Diego Reunion is successfully winding down after what I’m sure was a great time for everyone on the West Coast. I know that Wads plans to put a spread in the Fall Edition of the Windscreen on how it all went, but I would like to offer my thanks now to the West Coast Reunion Committee for all their hard work. Having been in the positions that I know what a challenge it can be to put on a good show. However, I also know how rewarding – and (most times) fun – it can be to work on one of these committees with a few fellow Intruders. I encourage everyone to take a hard look at TLad’s request in his comments and to think about volunteering for the next one.

I also echo TLad’s request for help in our continuing quest for new members from the Enlisted side of the family. We have been struggling with how to better engage our Intruders for quite a while and, obviously, have not been as successful as we would like. Maybe this is a bridge too far, as other similar organizations have had little success in this area – but anyone with good ideas on this effort is “strongly encouraged” (as we used to say) to step up and help us out. Everyone is still on the hook to reach out to former friends who have not joined yet – but we certainly do need some extra help on the Enlisted situation.

By the time you read this, another event will have occurred on the A-6 community and certainly the B/N side of the house. On 31 March, Lt Col W.P “Wooder” Donnelly, the last of 17 Marine COs of VT-86 (the Advanced NFO Training Squadron at NAS Pensacola), will retire. Along with a change to the Command structure (which will now alternate Navy NFO and Pilot COs), this past year saw the retirement of the venerable T-39 multi-place trainer jets and six Operation Flight Trainers (OFTs) from the training pipeline. Student Naval Flight Officers (SNFOs) in the Strike/Fighter pipeline now receive more comprehensive training and accumulate more tactical jet flight time prior to entering their respective Fleet Replacement Squadrons (FRS). “The UMFO syllabus provides a great opportunity for students to work with systems that are very similar to what they will see when they get to their fleet assignments, giving them a huge head start with basic tactics and system management compared to prior students,” said LT Justin Porter, a VT-86 instructor pilot. VT-86 received 17 modified T-45C Goshawk trainers and six Operation Flight Trainers (OFTs) since October 2013 to support the UMFO syllabus. The aircraft modifications include the Sniper sensor pod and avionics changes created to support the new Virtual Mission Training System (VMTS). While the newly modified aircraft are visually very similar to other F/A-18s, the cockpits and avionics have been significantly improved. New throttle grips and an aft cockpit hand controller were added with “Hands on Throttle and Stick” (HOTAS) capability. Furthermore, new flight recording systems allow for more information to be analyzed during the debrief. Advanced debriefing stations take advantage of the increased data recorded throughout each flight, including audio and video data, which is stored on the Enlisted side. The advanced NFO syllabus now requires 40 flights in the T-45 and 44 simulators in the new state-of-the-art simulator (I’ve been in it, and it would make any B/N who spent hours in the old WST cly). INFOs basically live in the Simulator Building now and, besides the FAM simulators which are taught by civilian Contract Instructors, all the simulators are taught or administered by the INFOs. INFOs also run the Ground Station and provide the virtual red air and Airborne Intercept Control for the All Weather Intercept Radar (AWIR). Please read the article in this edition provided by Wooder and his folks on what is happening at VT-86 these days to get a much better idea on what the new training in the T-45 is all about.

SF/Buzzard

T-86 NFO Training

Contributed by LcCpl William P. “Woody” Donnelly, CO VT-86

Training Squadron EIGHT SIX (VT-86), the “SabreHawks,” recently transitioned to the Undergraduate Military Flight Officer (UMFO) syllabus, allowing students to flow directly from the T-6 Texan II to the T-45C Goshawk, eliminating the T-37 era fighter trainer from the pipeline. Student Naval Flight Officers (SNFOs) in the Strike/Fighter pipeline now receive more comprehensive training and accumulate more tactical jet flight time prior to entering their respective Fleet Replacement Squadrons (FRS). “The UMFO syllabus provides a great opportunity for students to work with systems that are very similar to what they will see when they get to their fleet assignments, giving them a huge head start with basic tactics and system management compared to prior students,” said LT Justin Porter, a VT-86 instructor pilot. VT-86 received 17 modified T-45C Goshawk trainer jets and six Operation Flight Trainers (OFTs) since October 2013 to support the UMFO syllabus. The aircraft modifications include the Sniper sensor pod and avionics changes created to support the new Virtual Mission Training System (VMTS). While the newly modified aircraft are visually very similar to other F/A-18s, the cockpits and avionics have been significantly improved. New throttle grips and an aft cockpit hand controller were added with “Hands on Throttle and Stick” (HOTAS) capability. Furthermore, new flight recording systems allow for more information to be analyzed during the debrief. Advanced debriefing stations take advantage of the increased data recorded throughout each flight, including audio and video data, which is stored on the Enlisted side. The advanced NFO syllabus now requires 40 flights in the T-45 and 44 simulators in the new state-of-the-art simulator (I’ve been in it, and it would make any B/N who

“Without question he was correct about Viet Nam strat- egy. When I was there in 1964 and 1965 we recognized that the best way to defeat the Viet Cong was to chop off the single dredge that kept open the highly sited Red River. At the time this could have been accomplished with minimal loss of life using gun fire from a Navy 8 gun cruiser. Viet- nam would have been over in about 5 weeks after sinking this dredge: Strategy & Tactics 101, day one hour one: you defeat the enemy by cutting off his food and ammunition. Then the conflict is over in about 5 weeks.”

McNamara would not allow it, for fear of offending the Soviets, who were furnishing most of the enemy’s logisti- cal support. Had we choked off this support at that time, in such economical and timely manner, the conflict would have been terminated in short order. Instead, LBJ & McNamara let the North enlarge and spread out its logistical infras- tructure to the point where use of conventional ordnance was like shooting BBs at a sponge.

However, once Admiral Moorer convinced the Nixon Administration to mine the port (there no longer being 8 gun cruisers available) the war was indeed brought to an end. Ironically, for me, immediately following the truce signing I became one of an advance party at Hai Phong to assess the mission for clearing those mines. They must have been effective, because that was about the first thing North Vietnam wanted us to do something about.”

Editor’s note: The dateline for Admiral Moorer’s obituary was 2/4/2004. The commentator, Christopher Ruddy - the writer who forwarded the article/obit now on our website - was a staffer for Admiral Moorer at CINCPACFLT. Please click on the Intruder Association website, for the full article.

Intruders: In this issue, our editor, Ken Waidelich, has deliberately focused on Desert Storm. I have very much enjoyed reading his comments – he is a good writer, Ken. My com- ments this spring will focus on a different theme, though, about an individual who had a profound influence on our Navy and our service careers.

Back in February, on the anniversary of his 2004 death, I chanced upon a lengthy article I decided to save for Windscreen and for our web site. It was about one of our great Navy leaders, from a generation before the Gulf War – Admiral Tom Moorer. As an admirer of our Vietnam War era Intruders will most likely remember (well too) Admiral Moorer served as CINCPACFLT 1964-1965, as our CNO 1967-1969, and then was named Chairman of the Joint Chiefs – serving from 1970 until 1974 – all key years dur- ing the Vietnam conflict.

As Chairman he would have played a central role in Vietnam strategy and implementation. I’ll admit, though, had never read much about his tour as the head of the Nation’s military, so when the article came across in my clips, I decided to save and mention in this issue of Windscreen because I have the sense many of you will both remember Admiral Moorer from your active duty days, and find his role in that conflict of real interest. The article, “Adm. Moorer’s Last Warning,” which includes quotes from Moorer’s post obit, is too lengthy for Windscreen, but its preamble I am repeating to the right. We are posting the full article on the web site, www.intrudersassociation.org, if you have interest once you’ve read what follows. I hope you enjoy.

Best regards to all of you,

Tim
From the MARINE GENERAL OFFICER ADVISOR

Editor’s note: Our Marine General Officer Advisor, Maj General Marty Post, has contributed to this Desert Storm Edition by sharing his experiences in the Gulf where he deployed as the Maintenance Officer of VMA (AW)-224 Bengals under the command of LtCol William “Pig” Horne. His article, VMA (AW)-224 Combat Operations in Desert Storm, begins on page 12.

The INTRUDER TRIBUTE

Virginia Beach Update

Following an extended negotiation, the Virginia Beach Intruder Tribute Committee has reached an agreement with the City Leaders on the location of the Intruder Tribute. The location will be adjacent to the Naval Aviation Monument Park and ocean boardwalk. This location will be absolutely ideal for maximum public exposure and it augments Monument Park. You can take a virtual tour of the Monument Park area at http://hrana.com/monument-webcam/. Presently, the committee is planning for an official on-site tribute dedication on June 11th. The final dedication date will be listed on the Intruder Association website.

THE LAST LOW-LEVEL A-6 NIGHT COMBAT MISSIONS

By Pete Hunt

It was January 1991, and our strategic mission was unambiguous in place and time – Saddam Hussein needed to move his armies out of Kuwait and back into Iraq by midnight January 16 local time. The “or else” was also clear. The “time in the sand” deadline would be enforced by hundreds of thousands of U.S. Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Airmen – mostly stacked up in Saudi Arabia alongside the forces of dozens of other nations, including Hafez Assad’s Syria. It was only the second time the United Nations had authorized the use of force, the first being during the Korean War.

Only three men onboard Ranger had flown in combat, including our CAG, Rabbit Campbell, and the legendary “Bug” Roach, who had come out to the carrier as a last minute replacement for the CAG LSO. Their combat sorties had been over Vietnam fifteen years earlier. Some things never change on the ship, however: the JP-5 taste to everything, hot and cold water (never at the same time) for showers, and the rumbling violence of the catapult felt overhead from the “dirty shirt.” The instinct was to fight as we had trained, which in the Intruder community meant “going low.” But Iraq had fielded a one-million-man army, and that was a lot of guns pointing straight up when it was time to go feet dry.

Real world experience with the Soviet SA-6 missile system – ironically, learned through conflict with Syria and surrogates in the 1980s – was limited, but the overall impression of this SAM was of a near invincibility. At Fallon’s Electronic Warfare (EW) range, the simulated SA-6 reached up to ingressing jets like a death ray. As Ranger approached the Straits of Hormuz, a definite cleavage was apparent between the Attack mission strike leads: low or high? It was a tough decision. The initial three strikes to launch from the Attack mission strike leads: low or high? It was a tough decision.

For the upcoming Fall 2016 issue, I want to call upon those Intruder pilots and BNs flying the Intruder in Desert Storm. Much has been written about the Gulf War, but there is much more to tell – you have the stories, share them with us.

A Tribute To Desert Storm

This Spring marks the 25th anniversary of the end of Desert Storm. It is hard to believe that so much time has already passed since the United States transitioned from a posture of Cold War defense to an assertive projection of power in the Middle East. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait stirred a sleeping giant and, unfortunately for Saddam and his forces, called for the strike capability of the mighty Intruder.

In the winter of 1991, America awoke to the sound of Headline News broadcasting the explosions of laser guided “smart” bombs in the heart of Iraq – delivered courtesy of the Grumman A-6 Intran. Daily Pentagon television news debriefings showed General Norman Schwarzkopf rolling footage of the previous day’s attacks featuring Intruder FLIR (Forward Looking Infra-Red) tapes of enemy soldiers running from their vehicles too late as the laser-guided bombs from the deadly accurate Intruders made their impact. For those Intruder pilots and BNs flying strike missions, it also marked the end of the low-level to the pop-up attack, as we learned firsthand about the vulnerability of jets flying in the face of AAA and Roland Surface to Air Missiles (SAMs).

In previous issues of Windscreen, I asked you to share your stories of A-6s in action. You stepped right up and did not disappoint your fellow Intruders. In this particular edition of Windscreen, you will get to share three recollections of events surrounding Desert Storm. You will read author, Peter Hunt, which just may inspire you to send along your own perspective of the Gulf War.

For the upcoming Fall 2016 issue, I want to call upon those Intruders who might not have seen combat, but still fought the Cold War for many years leading up to Desert Storm. Your Intruder buddies want to read about Cub Point, Carrier Deployments, and the Far East. I also plan to review the highlights of our San Diego reunion – so please, send along your pictures and stories.

Wheels Up! Winds
Our small group of strike planners looked blankly at each other for a moment, then Rivers chimed in, “We can shoot a HARM at the SA-2 on our way to the target,” as if we were stopping at the convenience store for a gallon of milk on the way home from work. Rivers followed up with “Right, Pete?” I nodded my best bobblehead “Yes sir!” trying to sound confident.

Shooting a HARM en route to bombing the target was strongly discouraged by the experts at Fallon due to the complexities involved. For us, the tactic required keeping the ACU set up for a HARM shot until 23 miles from the target. It would be the first launch of a HARM from an A-6 in combat. Once the missile was launched and its brilliant plume away from our night adapted eyes, Rivers would need to complete 13 steps to switch the ACU from the HARM shot to a bombing run to release the Rockeyes. Presumably, it would be during this time that we would first encounter triple-A and possibly SAMs. We would need to switch over the ACU, acquire the target, and avoid the threats while not running into the ground for about three minutes. Then we could lay down our 12 Rockeyes on the Iraqi boats, turn around, and go home.

Rivers and I spent most of the next 24 hours before the strike ‘arm chair flying’ the hop and going through the ACU switchology drill again and again. The strike had just started briefing when Ranger’s Captain came up on the IMC to let us know that Tomahawk missiles had launched, signaling the start of Operation Desert Storm. The cat shot and high altitude transit to the Iraqi early warning radar horizon went mostly as briefed. We launched our HARM on time and were surprised to find that the missile plume directed a bit of scattered triple-A in our direction while still over the water.

Switching the ACU from HARM to Rockeyes yielded a fleeting, “Oh s*#@…reselect light” false alarm, but we were set up for bombs at 20 nm to the target. Mostly above the fog in the target area, we accelerated for the final minute of the attack run at 450 knots. As we raced toward the red ropes and flickering barrage fire of heavy triple-A, I remember wondering, “How the hell are we going to get through this wall of s*#@?” I pushed the stick forward and descended to 300 feet AGL. As we got closer, I could start to pick out and avoid the individual triple-A sites. There was a depth to the barrage fire, and we weaved a 3-4 G path around the thickest of the hail until 3 miles from release when we climbed to 400 feet and steadied up for the straight and level of “government time.” Augmenting the light show were multiple unguided SAMS and corkscrew-shoulder fired IR missiles – all launched to distract us. The IP inbound to the target was the longest minute of my life.

The 12 Rockeyes came off of alternate sides of the jet, barely rocking the wings as each 500-pound bomb was released milliseconds apart. With the last bomb off, my eyes shifted to the instantaneous vertical speed and the baro altimeter as I turned to almost 90 degrees angle of bank and pulled a level, 5-G turn to starboard. Sensing we had passed 100 degrees of turn, I snapped the wings left to level, dumping the nose against the lift as the wings came under us again. We dipped below 200 feet, setting off the RADALT’s (radio altimeter) nightmarish alarm. I fought the urge to balloon, and coaxed the jet back above 180 feet in the darkness to extinguish the RADALT’s loud “deedle-deedle.”

The Iraqi boats were not there; they had sortied out to shoot at us over the water. Our bombs fell on the secondary targets of the Umm Qasr port buildings. The SA-2 stopped emitting at our HARM TOT and didn’t radiate for the remainder of the conflict. Air Wing Two would fly one more traditional low-level Intruder mission the following night to mine the waterway to Umm Qasr. Charlie Turner and Tom Costen were killed in the target area; it was Air Wing Two’s only loss of the 43-day war.

Other flights were made at low altitude, notably CAS and battlefield interdiction sorties during the four-day ground war. But to the best of my knowledge, Ranger’s two Umm Qasr strikes, and those low missions flown by other battle group carriers during the first 24 hours of Desert Storm, were the last A-6 night low-level combat missions ever flown. Trapping onboard Ranger at dawn, I remember thinking, “I sure as hell don’t ever want to do that again.” And we never did.
The First Gulf War (Iraqi War) was from 2 August 1990 to 28 February 1991 and was waged by a United Nations authorized coalition force comprised of 34 nations led by the United States against Iraq, in response to Iraq’s invasion and annexation of Kuwait.

During that time, I was the Commander of the flying wing and also H3 Air Base (360 km west of Baghdad). H3 Air Base was one of the many targets that the coalition had identified as valuable and therefore, worthy of an air strike.

On numerous occasions throughout the war, my radar officer informed me that his radar screen was completely full of bogeys (enemy aircraft) and that these bogeys were heading toward our air base. Ultimately, I would give the order for all weapons to be authorized for firing, air base illuminations to be turned off, and to sound the air raid siren. H3 Air Base was now in an alert situation and was also considered in a negative air defense.

Typically, only minutes after my radar officer saw the bogeys headed our way, the raids from the attacking aircraft started. The bombing was very intense. They heavily targeted the aircraft shelters, weapons storage, air base headquarters, air base air traffic control, administrations spaces, squadron headquarters, and even the Officers’ Mess. The bombing seemed to last continually for the days and nights that followed. The bombing continued in good weather and even in extremely bad weather, day and night. It made the days and nights that followed the bombing area impossible to sleep, eat, and shower.

The bombing of H3 Air Base Iraq. Throughout the war, immediately after the many air raids, my airmen and soldiers used to bring me pieces of what they thought were parts of aircraft that they had shot down. These parts included cluster bomb parachutes, a piece of a drop tank, and other parts that I quickly determined were not enough proof that they had shot down an enemy aircraft. My answer to them was always in a negative, and they would go away disappointed. However, on the night of January 17, 1991, two of my airmen brought to me the nose wheel of an aircraft. The aircraft’s nose wheel was still hot. I immediately realized that my men had shot down an enemy aircraft. At that time, I decided to go and search for the aircraft.

T

The airmen led me to the place where they found the nose wheel. I divided my men into three groups and ordered each group to search in a different direction for the aircrew. After about an hour of searching, I heard a clashing of gunfire (a signal that we had previously decided upon to show that we had found something). I quickly went to the shooting area and found two pilots lying on the ground with their full flight gear and parachutes in a way that could easily be spotted from the air, and the radio beside them which was transmitting on. There was fear in their faces. One of the pilots was injured in his face, and the other pilot had multiple cuts and a broken arm.

I quickly loaded the two wounded pilots into my jeep and then transported them to the infirmary where they were given medical attention for their injuries. I asked them their names and ranks and I learned that they were flying the Grumman A-6 Intruder. It is a twin engine, two seat, all weather, night and day attack aircraft. It has the ability to operate from land and aircraft carriers and is equipped with advanced avionics. It can even carry a nuclear bomb and be air refueled.

The pilot’s name was Lieutenant Bob Wetzel, and the Bomber/Navigator was Lieutenant Jeff Zaun. H3 Air Base was their target when they were hit by the Roland Surface to Air Missile (SAM). They ejected from their A-6 somewhere near the air base, where I found them. At the infirmary of the air base, there was a large mob crowd of soldiers, airmen, security officers, and soldiers from the air base guards (commandos) that were very angry and waiting to attack the two pilots, some even making it clear that they wanted to kill the two pilots. I continued to ensure their safety throughout the night by continuing to prevent the Iraqi mob from reaching the pilots. Throughout the night and the next morning, I was directly responsible for their safety and wellbeing. I am 100 percent certain, that if it were not for me, they would have been injured more than they were, or outright killed by the angry Iraqi mob.

The next morning, as I expected, the commander of the air base guards came to meet me. He asked about the two US pilots and claimed that it was his responsibility to arrest and to interrogate them. I told him that I have already sent them to Baghdad (the Iraqi Air Force Headquarters). He became mad and he told me that he will contact the main military director to inform him that I helped the two US pilots by sending them to Baghdad. I informed him that he should do whatever he wants to do. However, I already had talked to the Iraq Air Force Chief and told him that I was going to send the two US pilots to Baghdad and he agreed with me. I had made that call when I was at the infirmary with the two US pilots.

Two hours later, the Security Officer of H3 Air Base came to meet me, too. His name was Nassir Altikreety (he was Saddam Hussein’s cousin), and he said, “Sir, what you are doing is not right. Helping the enemy will affect your career, especially since you are well known as a brilliant officer and a good pilot with a lot of war experience.” I did not pay him any attention.

Three days later, after I sent the two US pilots to Baghdad, my airmen brought to me, the body of a British pilot. He had ejected from a Tornado, a British Air Force fighter aircraft. His initials were W.L., as it was written on the flight suit that he was wearing. He looked old and his rank was that of Major. His body was marked with a lot of pits by dogs or wolves, from his feet to his chest, I sent his body to Baghdad by special transportation.

When I arrived in the United States on January 22, 2012, I tried to locate two US pilots, Bob and Jeff, whom I assumed survived the war. However, I failed. I asked for help from my son, Zee, but he also failed. I asked for help from my lawyer, and he also failed. Finally, I asked my friend, Rodrigo Cruz. He is a high level tennis player and a very good chess player, too. He was able to find one of the US pilots, Jeff, through the Internet. Rodrigo spoke to Jeff’s mother and then he found Bob, through Jeff.

We corresponded through emails with Bob and Jeff until we decided to meet them on November 15, 2012. Jeff came from New York City, and Bob came from Denver, Colorado. The Great Meeting, as I named it, was in Crystal City at Ted’s Montana Grill at 6 p.m. I was excited to meet, in their home, the two brave US pilots who ejected in my home, after more than 21 years. They were supposed to be my enemy at that time, and now they have become my friends at this time. The world is too small.

In that Great Meeting, Rodrigo, Zee, Bob, and I discussed the reason of how their Intruder was shot down, why they could not avoid the Roland Missile, and what they were feeling when they were surrounded by the angry Iraqi mob—did they feel that they were going to be killed, did they think that they could survive the angry mob?

I also discussed with them something that they were not aware of. I told them that after I found them, one hour later, H3 Air Base was illuminated with flares by US aircraft that had come to rescue the two pilots. Their radio had been transmitting signals after they ejected from their A-6 Intruder. The US aircraft were striving to find the two US pilots. Their flares illuminated H3 Air Base from nighttime to daytime, as if it were 12 noon. Even we could hardly see because of the brightness of the flares that they had fired.

At the end of the Great Meeting, we exchanged gifts and took photos. Some of those photos were posted on Facebook. We still communicate with each other.

By General Layth Z. Muneer, Iraqi Air Force
The Bengals of VMA (AW)-224 were notified in early August 1990 to prepare to deploy to Southwest Asia (SWA), in support of 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing and I MEF, with a deployment date of late August. The squadron was commanded by LtCol William “Pig” Horne with Maj Tom “Goose” McGrath as the executive officer. At that time, the A-6 community had G-limit restrictions on aircraft to include 4.5G and 3.0G limited aircraft. As 224 prepared aircraft for deployment, VMA (AW)-242 landed in Cherry Point on their way to SWA. Upon arrival in Cherry Point, 242 was notified by HQMC to transfer their unrestricted aircraft to 224 and then redeploy to El Toro to start the transition to the F/A-18D. The Bengal Maintenance Department worked 24/7 to transfer and accept aircraft, and would deploy with 10 A-6E TRAM equipped aircraft. VMA (AW)-224 departed Cherry Point on 23 August, and after 16 plus hours of flight time – with an enroute stop in Rota, Spain – arrived at Shaikh-Isa Air Base, Bahrain. After 16 plus hours of flight time, the squadron was assigned to MAG-11 which included F/A-18A, F/A-18D, EA-6B air-craft, and VMA (AW)-533 (an A-6 squadron that arrived from a UDP deployment in Iwakuni, Japan). During the months of September through December, 224 conducted deterrent and training sorties as part of Operation Desert Shield. The training sorties included both day and night, high and low altitude training over southern Saudi Arabia and numerous night RABFAC (Radar Beacon Forward Air Controller) sorties in northern Saudi Arabia with Division Forward Air Controllers. As we closed in on 1991, the pace of training accelerated with numerous large MAG-11 strike package sorties that would mirror image the first several days of combat missions.

The A-6 (Grunman Iron Works) showed how tough it was when a 224 aircraft hit a radio tower during a night RABFAC training mission. The aircraft lost 3 feet of right outer wing panel and tore off the entire left engine inlet. With a FOD’ed engine and a hydraulic failure, the aircrew flew the stricken aircraft back to base and recovered safely. The aircraft was re-paired on site and flew the morning of the day that combat operations began.

Operation Desert Storm (DS) commenced on 16 January 1991 with VMA (AW)-224 assigned to fly night sorties for the entire operation. The initial nights of DS would find 224 flying night strikes into Iraq with bridges being the primary targets. The weapons loadout for these missions were 2 MK-84 (2,000LB) Laser Guided Bombs (LGB). Additional strike loadouts included 12 or 24 MK-82 (500LB) and 6 MK-83 (1,000LB) Low Drag bombs. After the first week of strikes, 224 was assigned single ship night road recce missions over Kuwait. The loadout for these missions was 11 MK-20 Rockeye Cluster Bombs and one or two MK-82 LGBs. 224 flew these missions every night right up until the ground forces pushed into Kuwait.

The nightly schedule would assign A-6s to Kill Boxes at thirty minute intervals with the A-6 using its AMTI Radar and TRAM FLIR to engage any moving or hot target that was found. The night before the ground forces pushed off from the line of departure, VMA (AW)-224 dropped MK-77 Fire Bombs onto the enemy trenches/fire pits in front of the I MEF Marines with each aircraft carrying eight MK-77 Fire Bombs. The last combat missions flown by VMA (AW)-224 were on 26 February 1991 over the “Highway of Death” as the Iraqi forces tried to escape from Kuwait.

Throughout the 41 days of combat operations, the squadron flew 422 combat sorties and dropped more than 2.3 million pounds of ordnance. During DS, 224 recovered several USN A-6 aircraft from deployed carriers to include a Navy A-6 with a 57MM AAA hole through its outer wing panel (OWP). The crew of Jeff Martin and Don Quinn from VA-65 had diverted from USS Theodore Roosevelt. Bengal maintenance changed the OWP and launched our sister-service A-6 back to the carrier the next day. (See attached photo.)

The Bengals departed Bahrain on 26 March 1991 and each jet logged over 18 hours apiece on the flight back to Cherry Point with a stop in Rota, Spain. Upon their return, the Bengals had a short turn around and departed from Kuwait. The “Highway of Death” as the Iraqi forces tried to escape from Kuwait.

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DEPARTING

RDML Stephen H. Baker, USN (Ret)
CAPT Timothy "TJ" Block, USN (Ret)
LTGEN William H. Fitch, USMC (Ret)
CDR Richard Warren Hess, USN (Ret)
CAPT Gerald Herman Hesse, USN (Ret)
CAPT Kolin Jan, USN (Ret)
LT James W. Kennedy, USN(R)

Cactus Jack Jordan has completed an extensive overhaul to our New Look For Our Web Site.

missing intruders.

Fellow Intruders

We have gotten our active membership up to 111 members. Unfortunately, the number of fellow Intruders who have let their membership lapse has risen to 621. I have two initiatives underway and ask your help in accomplishing the task of getting these folks back. Our webmaster is in the process of posting the list on the website. For that effort, we will send out a 99 asking you to look at the list and contact those you know. For those attending the reunion we will be providing all attendees with a copy of the list.

The offer is still out there – for every three members you get reinstated, you will get a year added to your paid membership. Send me an email with the names to membership@IntruderAssociation.org, and when I confirm they have re-upped, I will update your membership accordingly.

The reunion is happening now, and the number of attendees is great. Tail Hook is right around the corner, and IA will have our booth there, share the Attack Ready Room, and have our World Famous Breakfast up by the pool. Help “preserve the memory”. Help get our lost brothers back!

V/R Clyde Cain Membership Chairman
The INTRUDER ASSOCIATION Membership Application

Name ___________________________ □ New Applicant □ Renewal Date ____/____/____

Street Address _____________________________________________________________________________________________

City ____________________________ State __________________________ Zip _______ Tel ( ) ________________

Spouse’s Name ___________________ E-mail ___________________________ Your call sign or nickname _______________

Military Service: Retired □ Active Duty □ None □

Branch: ________________________________

Pilot □ B/N □ Maintainer □ Ordy □ Support □ Associate □

War Veteran of: Korea □ Vietnam □ Gulf □

Service Dates (YY-YY) __________Squadrons __________________

Carrier Air Wing/Marine Air Wing ________________________________

Membership: □ 1Yr $25 □ 2 Yr $45 □ 3 Yr $65

The Intruder Association is accepting new and renewal membership applications via PayPal on our website or by personal checks. To access the PayPal method, go to http://www.IntruderAssociation.org and select Join, for new members, or log in at Members Log In. To pay by personal check, please mail this application along with your check made payable to:

The Intruder Association
c/o Clyde Cain
18407 Rangeland Rd.
Ramona, CA 92065

For questions, contact Clyde Cain at membership@IntruderAssociation.org.

Click JOIN/RENEW link at www.IntruderAssociation.org.