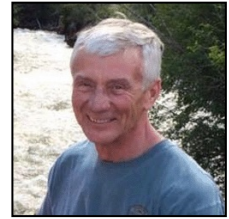




PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Hello Nighthawks!

Time sure flies, it's hard to believe that winter is over or almost so. It was a great year for snow all over the west and a great ski season (that is still going strong in some resorts)! For those who love the heat, your time is almost here!

SFA Mission Statement

The purpose of the SFA is to preserve the legacy of the F-117A as the First-Generation Stealth Fighter, provide educational awareness of its technological development and contributions to the evolution of today's Fifth and Sixth Generation stealth aircraft. In doing so, the SFA will operate as a private foundation through which its efforts and activities will serve to preserve, over time, the institutional knowledge and cohesion of individuals whose expertise and experiences might further the development of others in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). To perform all activities to educate through various forums, as determined by the Board of Directors, to carry out the purpose of the SFA, as set forth in the Certificate of Formation and these Bylaws. Additionally, the association will plan, organize and execute a gathering of the Stealth Fighter Association membership after approximately five years from the last gathering.

Not a lot to report from the board for this quarter. As we have passed our first year as your board of directors we made one change to the positions on the board to better level out workload for the members. As most of you are probably aware, Tnle McCloskey does all the heavy lifting for us regarding reunion planning, but she was also doing Secretary duties. While she was handling this just fine, we have decided to move the secretary position to John Faris. This will allow Tnle to focus on the reunion planning (along with Greg Feest!). Thanks a lot to John for agreeing to take this position.

Jim Garlitz has been working with Yancy Mailles and others on the aircraft status and as expected, much of the information is still considered too sensitive to publish. However, we have pulled together a good list of those aircraft on static display (or a stick) and have included it in this edition of the newsletter.

In the last newsletter I asked for our members to help in the search for a webmaster, well, we had success. One of our members has a son who offered to help us maintain the site! We expect to renovate the website in the near future. Big thanks to Greg and especially Joe Sembower!

That's it for me this edition. However, please read on for several other updates and announcements. As always, feel free to contact me with any questions/comments at philipwmcdaniel@gmail.com

Phil



History Moment

Legend of the Nighthawk (Part II)

The Mythical Nighthawk

By October 1983, the 4450th had taken possession of 14, F-117s, but only eight were operationally ready. Nevertheless, later that month, Colonel James S. Allen, the 4450th Commander, declared the 4450th Test Squadron (I Unit) as having Limited Initial Operational Capability. It was a monumental victory. Those involved, had taken the F-117 program from its initial concept to IOC in 59 months. Still, the journey had been long, and with the limited number of aircraft, and their limited capability, morale both in the operational and maintenance communities needed a boost.

Milt Jantzen, Director of Government Requirements in Lockheed's Advanced Development Programs (ADP), recognized the strain on the 4450th and in the summer of 1984 went to Ben Rich with an idea. In the past, Milt had worked with Wilf Hardy, a British artist specializing in dynamic aircraft illustrations. Wilf had recently completed a painting of the U-2 and SR-71 for ADP, and Milt suggested to Ben that Lockheed commission a painting for the Tonopah Officer's Club. Ben liked the idea, but the question remained, how would Wilf create a painting that represented the mission of the 4450th without disclosing the mission of the 4450th? Milt's challenge became how to communicate with an artist who had no clearance.

In August 1984, Milt wrote to Wilf Hardy. "I am thinking about another commission for a large painting, once again of something special but very different." He went on, "First, this idea involves a bird, rather than an aircraft. Second, it's to go into a USAF Officers Club to be hung in a place of prominence." Using words instead of a paintbrush, Milt visualized a dramatic scene where a large bird of prey, an American species called a Nighthawk, dove onto an unseen target. He suggested that Wilf paint the scene in a desert, at night, with dramatic moonlight building a spectacular atmosphere. As Milt penned his closing remarks, he worried that Hardy may not accept the assignment because it did not spotlight an aircraft, but rather a bird. That was not the case.

Even though they were exchanging letters and not email, Wilf responded quickly and accepted the assignment. "The idea of the 'Nighthawk' painting is a very interesting one," he wrote. Though he pointed out that during his preliminary research he learned that the large bird of prey Milt described in his letter was not a Nighthawk, rather, a Nighthawk was "...smallish insect eater, with great flying and diving skills." He went on to say, "The picture you paint in words is very striking and I'm sure we can produce a painting to match it." Wilf suggested two options. The first was to paint the actual Nighthawk in action, possibly in the evening sky, but the second option focused on the Mythical Nighthawk Jantzen described in his letter. Wilf believed the second option would



Excerpt from "Before and After the Storm"

By Yancy Mailes



fully project Milt's idea of a Nighthawk, and that, combined with dramatic lighting and dark shadows would produce a striking effect. Wilf enclosed five black and white sketches of the Mythical Nighthawk for Milt's consideration.

Milt selected sketch B and Wilf went to work in early September 1984 completing the painting in November of that same year. Later that month, Milt and his wife flew to England, taking a train from London to Tunbridge Wells where Wilf Hardy lived. There, they ate dinner and Wilf unveiled his masterpiece. Jantzen later wrote, "He (Wilf Hardy) had captured the concept wonderfully." The large Mythical Nighthawk dominated the center of the painting diving down onto an unknown enemy. It's important to point out that in August, while negotiating the elements of the painting, Wilf, ever the technical realist, "...came up with the idea of painting a small actual nighthawk in an unobtrusive location on the piece." This addition created a juxtaposition between the two birds and instantly described the struggle of an F-117 attempting to evade detection while penetrating a Soviet Integrated Air Defense System (IADS). Hardy and his painting had captured why stealth was so important to the United States. Pleased, the two men shook hands and completed the transaction with the final payment. Regarding fees, the work came to 975 Pounds Sterling and with the currency conversion in 1984, the 36" x 28" framed painting cost Lockheed \$1,170. An ironic twist. After flying home, Milt presented the painting to Ben Rich who arranged a small ceremony at Tonopah.



Wilf Hardy's Mythical Nighthawk sketch

By this point, Colonel Howell M. Estes had replaced Colonel Allen, and he and Major Sandy Sharpe worked to prepare the 4450th for its first Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI). The stress was overwhelming, and the painting came at a good time as it, and the small ceremony, boosted morale. As expected, the 4450th passed its ORI and after the TAC Inspector General presented his results, the victors met at the Tonopah Officer's Club and Chinese Laundry (TOCACL) to celebrate. There, a photographer snapped a group photo, with the Mythical Nighthawk painting hanging in the background.



Original pilot cadre celebrating successful Operational Readiness Inspection in the TOCACL (Tonopah Officers Club and Chinese Laundry) circa 1984

*Front row left to right: Estes, Doc Bags, Gee, Sharpe, Staton, Hoey, Nicholl.
Middle row, left to right: Stewart, Nelson, Larsen, Gill, Harris, Merritt, Mudge.
Back row standing, left to right: Bowman, Zimer, Wesolowski, Paulsen, Williams, Crouch, Mahan, Wade.*

In later years Mark Singleton reflected on his understanding of the Mythical Nighthawk.

I had a Great Sponsor, TSgt Faye. My first day he took me up to site, we did a bunch of in processing and showed me up close to the jet. After dinner, he took me over and showed me the Rec Center. After making sure nobody was around, he explained the painting that was in the entrance from the patio between the rec center and the chow hall. He ask[ed] me what the Big Blackbird was, I said "A Nighthawk", since we just spent a day around it. He told me "Nope, that is a big black eagle, the Nighthawk is the little bird slipping out of his claws". The Black Eagle represented the USSR. He then took me up to the Library (upstairs in the rec center) and showed me a copy of the Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Birds. And sure enough, the Nighthawk (Common) was in there and the drawing looked exactly like it. I have a copy of that Field Guide (copyright 1977) in my library now.



F-117 SCRAPBOOK REPUBLISHED!

Yancy Mailes and Tony Landis have recently republished one of their books "*F-117 Nighthawk Stealth Fighter - An Illustrated Developmental History*". Excellent product with lots of great pictures from the early days. The book is available hard copy, and in either Apple Book or Kindle formats. A small portion of the proceeds from this book are donated to the SFA. Review and purchase at this link: <https://www.detailandscale.com/detail-scale-publications-3/f-117-nighthawk-developmental-history>.

ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETARY INTERMENT

Colonel Jerry Fleming, Bandit 152, will be interred at Arlington on July 5, 2023. Jerry was one of the earliest operational pilots in the 4450th, and it's first Director of Operations. For those who wish to attend the interment, meet at the Administration Building at noon for a one o'clock ceremony. There will be a reception at the Fort Meyers club after the ceremony. If you plan to attend the reception, please send an RSVP to his daughter Lisa at lfphillips@fcps.edu

Jerry passed away in Dec 2021, his obituary is located at: <https://www.tributearchive.com/obituaries/23340501/gerald-b-fleming>



TONOPAH TEST RANGE CONTAMINATION

There is an effort underway to obtain compensation and medical assistance for DoD personnel who were stationed at TTR (or any facility within the NTTR) and are having medical issues. TTR was the location of five atomic bomb detonations in the late 50s and early 60s. In 2000, the government signed into law an act to compensate DoE employees and other civilians who worked in the range and they have received billions in compensation. Inexplicably, DoD personnel were not part of that bill. Many of our fellow Nighthawks have had significant health issues since being stationed in the NTTR so this effort is an attempt to get congress to pass legislation to provide DoD personnel with the same or similar compensation already provided to many DoE personnel and other civilians. Dave Crete, former security forces at TTR is leading this effort and it is well underway.

If you have been impacted or just want more information please review the slide deck at :

https://www.dropbox.com/s/2gdm8j8e91iz2cj/The%20Invisible%20Enemy%20at%20TTR_2023.pdf?dl=0

To contact Dave Crete email him at dave@davecrete.com

You can also visit his Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/238651111872345>



AIRCRAFT ON STATIC DISPLAY

<u>TAIL NUMBER</u>	<u>NICKNAME</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
79-10781	Scorpion 2	Static Display at National Museum of Air Force; Wright-Patterson AFB, (Dayton, OH).
79-10782	Scorpion 3 - Painted as 85-0816	Aircraft painted as 85-0816 and on static display at Holloman AFB (Holloman, NM).
79-10783	Scorpion 4 - Grey Dragon Test team Scheme 2007	Static Display at Air Force Flight Test Museum; Edwards AFB.
80-10785		Static display at Lockheed Martin Palmdale facility.
81-10794	Delta Dawn	Reserved for Display at Robins AFB, GA in 2023 (Warner Robins, GA).
82-10799	Midnight Rider	Static Display at Hill AFB Aerospace Museum (Ogden, UT).
82-10803	Unexpected Guest	Static Display at Reagan Presidential Library and Museum (Simi Valley, CA).
84-10810	Dark Angel	Delivered to Pima Air and Space Museum (Tucson, AZ). Aircraft still under restoration.
85-10813	Toxic Avenger	Static Display at Castle Air Museum (Atwater, CA).
85-10817	Shaba	Static Display at Air Zoo Aerospace and Science Experience (Kalamazoo, MI).
85-10819	Raven Beauty	Delivered to Stafford Air and Space Museum (Weatherford, OK) in Mar 2023. Awaiting restoration.
85-10831		Static Display at Strategic Air Command and Aerospace Museum (Ashland, NE).
85-10833	Black Devil	Static Display at Palm Springs Air Museum (Palm Springs, CA).



FALLEN NIGHTHAWKS

The SFA Board of Directors maintains a list of Fallen Nighthawks besides our current members. If you've been to a reunion, you have probably seen it on a table at our banquet. We solicit your help to document and add any new Fallen Nighthawks you become aware of. Additionally, If you have questions concerning a specific Nighthawk, please contact Alex Odekerken at alex.odekerken@gmail.com.

PIONEERS OF STEALTH



The Pioneers of Stealth are a mix of the aerospace industry, the low observable program office at Wright Patt, the Airstaff, the testers, and MAJCOM folks that brought into being the first stealth aircraft. These are the very first stealth aircraft "Have Blue" built by the Skunk Works, which led directly to the first stealth fighter, the F-117, Northrop's "Tacit Blue" that pioneered the curvilinear shape used today and the first stealth radar. Tacit Blue's technologies went into the B-2, the world's first stealth bomber.

Over past two years, the Pioneers of Stealth have created a memorial dedicated to the people who worked on these pioneering aircraft. You may have seen the mockup of the memorial at the last reunion in the banquet room. This memorial will be dedicated on 17 July 2023 at the National Museum of the USAF at Wright Patterson. SFA members and their guests are cordially invited to attend. The link below will bring you to their Welcome page. On it you will find "click here". Then follow the links to register for the Dedication Ceremony, the Dedication Celebration Banquet inside the museum on 17 July and the social the night before.

Pioneers of Stealth Welcome page:
<https://www.pioneersofstealth.org/>





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TAX DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS

The Stealth Fighter Association is a Texas based non-profit corporation and an IRS approved 501(c)3 organization. Contributions will be applied toward operating costs for the SFA as well as our recurring gathering of the SFA membership. Your contributions are tax deductible and can be submitted via mail to (electronic options coming soon):

Stealth Fighter Association
c/o Alex Odekerken
270 E Cherry Ave
Arroyo Grande, CA 93420

Contact Us

f117sfa@gmail.com

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