

# *A Word from Willie*

Society of Wild Weasels Newsletter

November 2023



## **CINCWW's Corner**

Fellow Weasels,

Happy Thanksgiving to you and your family! In this issue we have an article by Lt Gen (Ret) "Orville Wright, an update on the 79 Fighter Squadron at Shaw and an article by "Spot" Taber who is a teacher at the Weapons School. There are lots of events in this article and

updates. In addition, we have the web pages for registering for the Reunion which runs 11 April to 14 April at Fort Walton Beach and is hosted by the 33 Fighter Wing. Our two Project officers for the wing are pictured in their section. Thanks to Vic and Awol for supporting the Weasels.

I want to thank Col “Fuego” Tuzel, Hollywood Hanton and JohnBoy Walton for sitting on our grant board and awarding a \$1000 education grant and a \$500 grant in honor of Medal of Honor awardee Col Leo Thorness. Also hats off to Phil “Quack Bear” Steeves who was selected as the River Rat of the Year for 2023. Well-deserved award and thank you for what you do for our medical education and support to health Quack Bear. Please review Quack Bear’s medical information. We have a request from the 35 Cadet Squadron for ideas on a new CQ desk/mural design and a call out for artifacts. The new desk/mural design winner will receive 2 Wild Weasel TShirts from the Chief in Charge. Further below and on the website, Dave Brog is asking for volunteers to usher at a 50 the Anniversary Vietnam event on 13 January in DC. Please contact him if interested.

Lastly, I will close with another call out to our active-duty members! Many of you have been in harm’s way in the last year and with the world today there is always that possibility. Our Deputy CINC Abu has been leading forces in the Middle East, and he is always in my prayers. Let us know what you need, and we can support you. God Bless you and every Veteran— you make this the land of the Free and the home of the Brave!

Very Respectfully

Budman Redmond  
Society of Wild Weasels Chief in Charge  
YGBSM  
FILO

### **Fallen Wild Weasels**

Lt. Gen. Eugene D. Santarelli, WW#2744, Pilot, F-4G, F-16, 21 Sep 2023  
Our Condolences to their families, friends, and brothers in arms. Hand Salute! Rest in Peace!  
L.A. Bud

Membership Update

### **We welcome the following new members:**

Matthew “Fuego” Tuzel, WW #2876, Pilot, F-16  
Joshua “Chunk” Moffat, WW #2877, Pilot, F-16  
Tim “Fleagle” Legel, WW #2878, Pilot, F-16  
Steven Tittle, WW #2879, Pilot, F-16, F-35

L.A. Bud

Surviving Family Members

If you know of family members who qualify, have them contact us at:  
LABudF4G@gmail.com

L.A. Bud

## **Interview with Lt Gen (Ret) Orville Wright**

*Editor's Note: Lt Gen Bruce "Orville" Wright WW #1483 has been a squadron, group, wing, and NAF commander and is an expert in the Wild Weasel mission. His career culminated as the 5<sup>th</sup> Air Force Commander, and Commander U.S. Forces Japan. Since retiring in 2008, he has held numerous positions and is now the President & CEO of the Air and Space Forces Association, helping lead the 77-year-old association on an accelerated path of updated mission focus. Orville is frankly one of the best combat commanders this Editor has had the pleasure to work with. His DESERT STORM F16 squadron was well-trained, well-disciplined, and had incredible morale under fire.*

### **(1) *Tell us a little about yourself.***

As a new Lieutenant and then Captain flying F-4Es at Moody AFB in 1976, I hoped to fly the F-15 as soon as possible. But the timing didn't work out and I was sent instead to fly the F-4C Wild Weasel at Kadena AB, Okinawa in 1978. The squadron's F-4C Weasels had proven themselves in the Vietnam War and quickly proved to be a great experience. The pilots and EWOs of the 67<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron were highly experienced and highly skilled. Newcomers had to meet very high expectations before we were invited into the inner circle. I know we were motivated to work harder than at any time in our short flying careers. We had to be aggressive and capable and there was no tolerance for less-than-perfect execution. The more experienced F-4C crews took all your money on the range until one learned to compete, and the former Weasel F-4C and F-105G EWOs were tremendously demanding in teaching me to employ the F-4C and understand what killing SAMs was all about.

We had a world-class intelligence officer, Capt. Herb Kemp, who taught us in detail about SAMs and radar-guided AAA, and how to understand enemy tactics while suppressing and destroying threat systems. Our time in the 67<sup>th</sup> also introduced us to the strategic and operational levels of war in the context of tactical-level employment and the consequences of engaging, suppressing, and destroying enemy integrated air defense systems (IADs). Not long after, Kadena converted to F-15s, but I again missed the opportunity, this time because I and others were told we were now too experienced. We were then assigned to fly F-4Gs at Clark

AB in the Philippines, with the 90<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron, a unit whose combat air forces history dated back to World War I.

A highlight of that tour was the opportunity to deliver the first of two F-4Gs to Clark AB. Flying the F-4G taught us about future opportunities to integrate on-board and off-board intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) into fighter cockpits. Our 90<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron commander, Lt Col “Wild Bill” Taylor, also showed us how much fun it is to be Wild Weasels. The enduring learning experience was the opportunity to train and employ against realistic SA-2s and SA-3s on the Crow Valley range and to better understand how to survive against those threats and suppress and destroy them. Clark’s F-5 Aggressors provided incredible weekly opportunities to train against realistic enemy air-to-air threat systems.

After Clark, I was an intern at the Pentagon for a year. That’s when I met and married Kerri, the highlights of that tour; we have now been together, serving our nation all over the world, for more than 42 years. After the Pentagon, I graduated from the F-4 Weapons School and joined the 422<sup>nd</sup> squadron, gaining experience with advanced weapons, like the GBU-15/AGM-130 and laser-guided bombs. The mission focus of the 422<sup>nd</sup> then and now is to ensure warfighters always have the best weapons systems in the world and opportunities to constantly introduce new advanced technologies and capabilities into weapons system development, testing, and fielding. From there, I went to the Armed Forces Staff College and completed two years, nine months, and one day on the Joint Staff in the J3.

Transitioning to the F-16, I was assigned to Torrejon AB in Spain, where I became the Commander of the 614th Fighter Squadron, the “Lucky Devils,” carrying on a legacy that dated back to our WWII namesake B-17 squadron. After Saddam Hussein’s army invaded Kuwait, we deployed to Qatar, and I led our F-16C squadron throughout Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm from Doha International Airport in Qatar.

From there, I was selected for F-16 group and wing command. Wild Weasel experience as a younger fighter pilot motivated my enduring warfighting ethos, that the best defense is a decisive offense founded on being prepared to effectively target and kill radar-guided integrated surface-to-air and air-to-air enemy weapons systems and the enemy pilots and crews who attempt to use them. It was the honor of a lifetime to command the 35<sup>th</sup> Wing and have the opportunity to fly F-16 Block 50 fighters with “WW” as the tail flash!

Later I served in the Joint Staff/J3 as the J39 responsible for information operations and then as the Commander, Air Intelligence Agency. Again, the Wild Weasel experience framed command emphasis on ISR exploitation and targeting. For example, we were able to develop very effective tactics, techniques, and procedures using RC-135 SIGINT systems to directly cue F-16 Block 50 HARM targeting systems.

After a great tour as the ACC Vice Commander, I closed out my active-duty career as Commander, U.S. Forces Japan, and Commander, 5<sup>th</sup> Air Force, working closely with Japan Self Defense Force counterparts who were then, as now, stalwart allies.

***(2) You led a squadron during DESERT STORM. Can you tell us a little bit about your command philosophy and leadership in combat?***

I had an entire “Super Bowl” team of courageous warfighters in our squadron. My wingman, Eric Hutchins, never lost the “visual” or fell out of formation during more than 40 combat sorties. Our Crew Chiefs and Weapons Loaders were amazing. I did everything possible to reinforce their proven combat operations expertise and ensure they had clear commander’s intent, defined in mission-type orders that empowered them to take initiative and apply their unparalleled professionalism—both on the ramp and in the air. I made sure I led tough missions and that I was open to learning and to criticism along the way. Our 614th Fighter Squadron’s record in combat was exceptional and I remain proud of those accomplishments to this day. It wasn’t all smooth. Both Mike Roberts and Jeff Tice were shot down on the third day of DESERT STORM operations, but we got them out of jail in Baghdad thanks to air and space power. Every Lucky Devil came out of DESERT STORM alive. That outcome was, of course, an answer to prayers. I am eternally grateful for the decisive joint warfighting capabilities of America’s combat air forces.

***(3) Your Weasel experience is great. Would you share some of your thoughts on the Weasel mission?***

For me, the most important lessons of the Wild Weasel heritage and ethos are embracing responsibility for point-of-the-spear strategic consequences and decisive outcomes, expanding opportunities for operational targeting and destruction of enemy forces, and accountability for execution perfection in applying and employing tactical capabilities.

The Wild Weasel history is about reaching a supreme skill level and then fighting just as hard to get even better. I am very proud to have served as the 35<sup>th</sup> Wing Commander because of its Wild Weasel heritage. I worked hard to teach and emphasize enemy intent and weapons systems capabilities, countered by advanced on-board and off-board F-16 Block 50 ISR cueing and targeting capabilities, reinforced by the inspiring courage of Wild Weasel combat crews.

In my early days, I had a great intelligence officer who taught us all to think strategically, operationally, and tactically about why and how to decisively find and kill the enemies of peace and freedom around the world. The strategic level of credibility of our national security

leaders to deter war will always be founded on the ability of our American warriors to be decisive in joint warfighting operations at the decentralized tactical level of execution.

***(4) Switching gears, in your current job, you have instituted a lot of changes as AFA's President & CEO. Your video interviews with key Air Force leaders have helped organizations like the Society of Wild Weasels gain insight into how the Air Force is overcoming today's challenges. Tell us a little more about what you are doing with AFA.***

Everything we do at AFA, every day, is aimed at making sure our Association is relevant to our growing membership and to the Air and Space Forces, themselves. By being relevant there, we can have influence and impact across the national security landscape, in the Pentagon, in Congress, and even beyond, to leaders and influencers around the world.

One of my favorite interviews was with Col "Mule" Koslov of the 350<sup>th</sup> Spectrum Warfare Wing. I'm so impressed with what they are doing to leverage F-35 ISR capabilities. They understand that every kinetic and non-kinetic threat is a target and that persistent ISR capability is crucial to decisive combat air forces operations. The 350<sup>th</sup> is the best collection of Electronic Warfare Officers in the world. They know what to do and how to do it across the contested EW spectrum of joint warfighting operations.

Through conversations like this, AFA can highlight critical issues and connect key constituencies, from the military, from industry, from Congress, and elsewhere. Col Koslov made connections at that event that will lead to new capabilities for our warfighters and contributed to his being invited to help educate lawmakers and congressional staff on the critical needs in his community.

It's an honor of a lifetime to be able to advocate on behalf of the terrific Airmen and Guardians who have volunteered to serve their country and to play even a small part in shining a light on their service and amplifying their voice in the Pentagon and on Capitol Hill.

## **(5) What have I missed that you would like to add?**

Thank you, "Budman!" The Society of Wild Weasels is as important to the education of the public today as at any time in history. The Society's stories, founded on proven and exemplary courage, must be told over and over. The American public today is often distant from those who serve, and the lesson that freedom is never free must never be forgotten. None of us can ever do enough to support America's warfighters and those who develop the

technology and build the combat systems that deter war and, when necessary, prove decisive if deterrence fails.

In that light, I'd like to share one short Wild Weasel war story. During my first combat sortie leading F-16s to attack Ali Al Salem airfield in Kuwait, we were engaged by several Iraqi SAMs, including SA-2s and SA-6s. As we initiated the attack, my wingman and I watched an SA-2 target his aircraft. While Capt. Phil "Ruhldog" Ruhlman aggressively maneuvered and punched off his tanks, I heard F-4G pilot, **Maj. Eddie "Victor" Ballanco**, call "Magnum," verifying that he had targeted the SA-2 operators trying to kill "Ruhldog" with a HARM missile. Without radar guidance, the SA-2 trailed off to the ground. Phil lived to fight another day. Eddie had been my T-38 Instructor Pilot in 1974 when I first learned to land the T-38. Now he was there to save my wingman from being shot down!

Half a century after my commissioning, there is no doubt in my mind that the strength of our U.S. military comes from our individual warfighters, each strengthened by his or her family. Doing my best to encourage, empower, and enable them remains a lifetime gift and opportunity.



*General Wright and his wife, Kerri, during their 5<sup>th</sup> Air Force Commander tour in Japan*

*Word from Willie salutes General Orville for his dedication, his warrior ethos and his continuing service to our country. You done good Sir!*

### **Financials**

66,064.19 as of 17 Nov

### **Medical Update**

H.R. 4886 (the ACES Act) had 11 Congressman as co-sponsors in late July; that number stands at 15 today. We're still working to get co-sponsors in the Senate. The River Rats AMIC's strategy will be to gather more Congressional supporters. This is all directed to mandating the Aviator Cancer Examination Study, needed to further the investigation into the increased cancer rate in military aviators including potential causative factors.



We have made great progress coordinating with Tailhook in this effort. Other efforts are underway to try to garner support from the rotary wing community.

Regrettably, we did not get this act passed in the first year of the current Congress. There were a lot of competing issues, and next year will be an election year so it will be hard to get them to focus on our issue. But the NDAA has yet to be passed. We still have one more opportunity window, legislatively speaking, in the 118th Congress. The online letter-writing part of our future work begins in early February 2024 and goes to April. That's about 60 days of concentrated member outreach to federal lawmakers. At the recent River Rats Reunion, there were about 150 willing Rats who heard Vince "Aztec" Alcazar's H.R 4886 pitch at the membership meeting. These Rats will be among the first to write and send letters to their Congresspersons. Wild Weasels and Tailhookers will be encouraged to join the effort to ensure more federal lawmakers and staffers are reached with a shared message. ***Massed firepower! Stay tuned for the signal directing you when to engage.***

--Quack Bear

*Editor's Notes: Last year we as an organization supported this effort both individually and as as the Society. We hope to do that again. We will publish sample letters, how to contact your reps on the Website and will be asking those with a personal relationship to visit their rep. We need this study so our cancer rates are determined to be a VA coverable condition.*

## **Society Updates**

***Quack Bear wins River Rat of the Year for 2022***



*Quack Bear and Hollywood pose after Hollywood presented our Favorite Doc with the RROY Award. Well-Done!*

**Society of Wild Weasels works with 20<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group to award two grants in honor of Medal of Honor awardee Col Leo Thorness**

MSgt Cellise Rhodes (\$1000) and Capt Matt “Shark” Gutgsell (\$500) were awarded Leo Thorness grants by a board made up of Col “Fuego” Tuzell, JohnBoy Walton (our Shaw liaison) and Hollywood Hanton. Thanks for all the hard work and congrats to award winners!

#### **Keeping up with our Honorary Wild Weasels in Pilot Training**

We are tracking two former members of the 35 Cadet Squadron who are now in pilot training! Lt Kelly Jackson (WW # 2809) is one of the two architects of the 35 Cadet Squadron history room an in her own words.

“ I am currently a little over half way done with the T6 syllabus. I have had my initial solo and completed the first two blocks. I just recently started the formation block, and I am loving it! If the weather stays good I should be able to have my formation solo in the next couple

weeks. After that I only have one more flying block left before my final check ride. My class is scheduled to be done sometime before the holidays and have track night for our next UPT phase after we finish our mission check ride. I am supposed to have my graduation ceremony in January, and my family is planning to come out and support me. Thank you for supporting me in this journey,”



*Post Solo Ride*



*Dollar Ride*

**Good Luck KJ, you are clearly representing the Weasels in an outstanding manner!**

### **23<sup>rd</sup> Fighting Hawk Reunion in September**

*Let the Society host your pictures and remembrances at no cost!*



**Here is the link to the picture area of the Fighting Hawks Reunion!**

[Reunion: 23rd Fighter Squadron – September '23 – Society of Wild Weasels](#)

**Lt Gen “Juice” Jousas briefs the Wild Weasel mission and history at the Oak Harbor Rotary Club**



***Juice took the Wild Weasel Briefing and added his own experience! Great Job!***

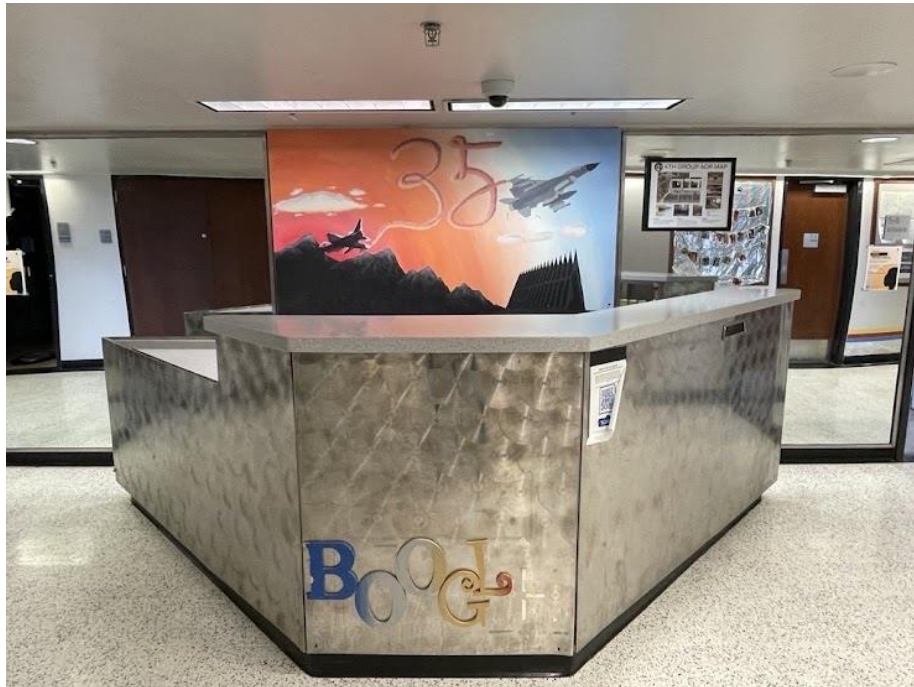
***Remember, the Society is here to support your efforts in telling our legacy!***

***The 35 Cadet Squadron needs your help!***

*Kad Kadlubowski our Academy liaison has reached out with support for help for the Society. Cadet Squadron 35 expressed interest in a redesign of their CQ desk with wood furnishings and lighting with gold and burgundy accenting similar to those of our Wild Weasel legacy patches.*

*They ask,*

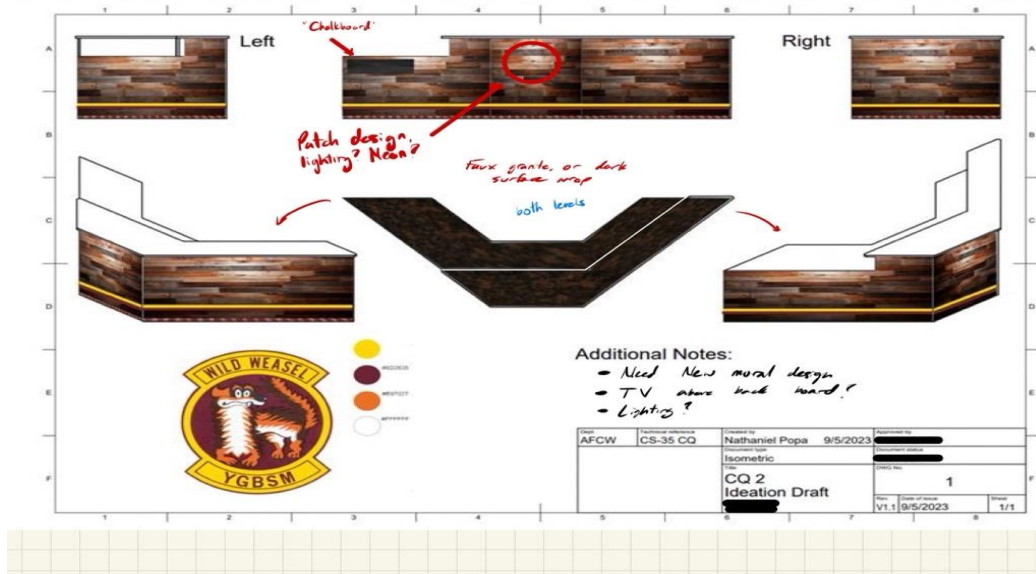
*(1) “Would you be able to give any advice or input on other elements we can include in the redesign that are in-line with Weasel legacy?” I’m attaching a pic of their current CQ desk along with the planned core changes below for reference. They are particularly interested in a new mural design for behind their desk. **The Society will provide anyone whose idea is used for the mural or desk design a pair of Wild Weasel Tshirts. That includes cadets!***



### Current Desk

- (1) They are also interested in the opportunity to display additional heritage items in their CQ area and around the squadron -- anything from old pictures to decommissioned ordinance. Please contact us at [WildWeaselReports@gmail.com](mailto:WildWeaselReports@gmail.com) if you have something to donate!

### New desk design submitted for approval (this is where we need creativity)!:



- (2) They are also interested in the opportunity to display additional heritage items in their CQ

area and around the squadron -- anything from old pictures to decommissioned ordinance. Please contact us at [WildWeaselReports@gmail.com](mailto:WildWeaselReports@gmail.com) if you have something to donate!

From Kad:” a great group of cadets this year -- highly motivated and interested in the Weasel legacy. Looking forward to working with them on this”

## **Volunteers Needed: Vietnam 50th Anniversary Event**

### *Vietnam 50th Anniversary Event in DC at National Cathedral*

Dave Brog is looking for volunteers to help in the special 13 January 2024 Vietnam 50th Final Event. Some local DC area River Rats, Wild Weasels and those connected to the AWCF have been asked by the AFA to provide 16-20 ushers for the 13 January event. It will run from 1600-1800 that day at the National Cathedral. Anyone wanting to help, please contact me at [davebrog@comcast.net](mailto:davebrog@comcast.net). (This is posted on our website)

### **Weasel Displays at the River Rats Museum**

*We have added many of our pictures in Annex A at the end of this publication.*



*Majors John Revak and Stan Goldstein's F-105 Weasel "Big Brass" Ones model at the Museum*



**Stan & Dave in front of a life-size digital copy of Keith Ferris's "Big Brass Ones"**



**A Great Wild Weasel Breakfast on Saturday before the banquet!**



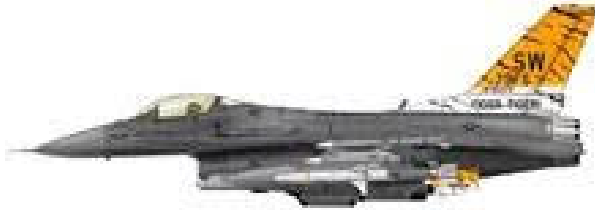
*John and Stan in front of a Thud D model at the Valiant Air Museum in Titusville FL!*

### **Update on the 79th Fighter Squadron Tigers**





The Tigers have been busy the last few months and are superbly led by Lt Col “Knight” Prevedar who is sustaining a culture of Warriors and ensuring his men and women are ready! A special Society of Wild Weasels thanks for flying the missing man formation for Wild Weasel #159 Jerry Hoblit at Arlington and Knight made sure his pilots were aware of Jerry’s Air Force Cross and combat record! Great job Tigers! Besides the Jerry Hoblit flyby the Tigers supported 7 other flybys or displays.



Some of the exercises that they have been a part of in the last few months include:

- DC Guard Misty Dawn Exercise—which is a comprehensive readiness exercise working with the DC Guard
- Navy Composite Training Unit Exercise (COMPTUEX) which is a certification event for the carrier strike group prior to departing on a deployment. “The 79 th FS called it epic joint interoperability exercise with an incredible amount of learning.”
- Coordinated for Immersion Day at the MTCs for families and other active duty members around Shaw (from making burritos to giving away popsicles to their support of the MTCs the Tigers are one with their Maintainers!)
- They had a Captain DETCO as Task Force Tiger in an Agile Combat Employment Exercise “Iron hand 23-07 and Iron Hand 23-08”. They have the first pilot to go through Multi-Capable Airmen Training.
- Neptune Hawk, at Nellis, which they just came back from—this is a huge interoperability exercise which really ties all of the AF capabilities together
- The Tigers will be back at Nellis for Red Flag 24-1 in January 2024. Good Hunting Tigers!

The Tigers produce a monthly newsletter that welcomes newcomers, identifies award winners and shows the culture of being a Tiger and flying Weasels today!

*Editor’s Note: “Multi-capable Airmen is a program that allows airmen to be trained in multiple skill sets for redundancy and increased capability.”*

**Thanks for all you do Knight and the Tigers! You are in our thoughts and prayers!**

## **Wild Weasel Reunion 11-14 April 2014 at Fort Walton**



Appreciate those who have already signed up for the 2024 Wild Weasel Reunion in Fort Walton Beach at the Island Resort Hotel, and we will be seeing the 33<sup>rd</sup> Fighter Wing which flies f-35s. We will have a great schedule for people, Eglin has a multitude of Wings and we will see as many of these as possible. We appreciate our volunteers who are part of the reunion committee!

The Reunion page is up and running. You can link to the events you want to participate in, and you can also link to the hotel. You can pay for the events directly or send a check. Let us know if you have any problems. We don't have a price for the banquet yet, we are still working on that one. Here are the procedures and links:

[Wild Weasels Reunion 2024 – Society of Wild Weasels](#)

[Wild Weasels 2024 Reunion Registration – Step 1 – Society of Wild Weasels](#)

**Will be putting out updates starting 15 December on who has signed up.**

**Our current reunion project officers:**



**Major Vic Babos**



**Capt AWOL Labowitch**

*For the Reunion we are lucky to have two stellar F-35 pilots in Vic and AWOL. They have jumped into the planning (when not teaching young F-35 pilots) and are really supporting us! Vic is a previous F-16 Pilot and AWOL is an A-10 Pilot.*

***Word from Willie Salutes you two and thanks you for your support!***

### **Interview with Spot Taber WW #2201**

Editor's Note: Phillip "Spot" Taber is our liaison with the Weapons School for both the F-16 and F-35 and loves teaching everything from weapons effects among other things. We appreciate the hard work from Spot! Spot first saw combat with the Philippines Expeditionary Forces which as they say "Last in First Out" a group that augmented and did great with the Bahrain F-4Gs in DESERT STORM. Below is their patch and a look at

the crews:



**The men of the PEF**



**A great PEF Weasel Patch**

## **Phil "SPOT" Taber, Lt Col, USAF Retired**

### ***(1) Tell us a little about yourself and your career?***

I did 22 years of active duty. Born and raised in Memphis, TN. Attended Memphis State University and received my commission through AFROTC. UPT at Laughlin AFB, TX. Assigned to F-4Es to Moody, 69 TFS.

Next assignment was the George AFB, CA, F-4G/F-4E Hunter Killer, 563 TFS and 561 TFS.

From there to Clark AB, RP, F-4G, 90 TFS Dicemen. While there was selected as one of six crews to be sent to DESERT STORM. We were assigned to the 81 TFS. We were the Philippine Expeditionary Force, or PEF Flight.

Once the war was over, returned to Clark AB. Departed Clark through the evacuation due to the eruption of Mt Pinatubo. Fun times..... not.

From there, I did Jump ALO, 75 Ranger Regiment, Ft Benning, GA. Next assignment was F-15C Eagles at Eglin AFB, FL, 58 FS.

Was next assigned to The Mighty Eighth Air Force, Barksdale AFB, LA, as a NAF Chief of Flight Safety.

Next and final flying assignment was the F-117A, Holloman AFB, NM. Flew with the 8 FS for 2.5 years, then was selected as initial cadre and instructor for the USAF Weapons School (USAFWS) F-117A Weapons Instructor Course (WIC).

After almost three years, I was selected for squadron command at the USAFWS, 57 Weapons Support Squadron (57 WPSS), Nellis AFB, NV. Retired from Big Blue in 2006 in that position.

Post retirement, I worked as a contractor at AFOTEC testing next gen fighters (F-22A & set up for F-35A) for almost three years before returning to the USAFWS as a DTRA contractor teaching hard and deeply buried target defeat, counter-WMD, weapons, fuzes, weaponeering, etc.

***(2) You are a teacher at the Weapons School, can you share what you do and how the weapons school is today?***

I am embedded in the Weapons School as a DTRA contractor. I was specifically hired into this position because I was an instructor at the USAFWS and had taught weaponeering and hard target defeat while on active duty.

Today, I provide academic instruction (hard and deeply buried target defeat, counter-WMD, weapons, fuzes, weaponeering, etc.), syllabus mission support through scenario planning, support through realistic target sets and weaponeering and the same type of “ReBlue” support for USAFWS instructors across the school.

As for the USAFWS, the school is still the same “intense” institution that strives to produce Patches who can plan and lead the first mission on Day 1 of a conflict and insuring the least skilled/experienced Airman (aircrew or mission enhancing/support personnel) are ready to fight the fight they have trained for.

The course is 5.5 months long, and more challenging in many aspects than when we were on active duty. The USAFWS has syllabi courses for ALL aspects of the warfighter domain, both kinetic and non-kinetic, in the atmosphere and in space. Not only does this the school sharpen their technical skill sets, but it also makes the students BETTER instructors and tactical problem solvers. Students truly learn integration across the board to include Joint DoD partners (USN, US Army, USMC, SOF)

Working at the USAFWS is still truly a pay-it-forward life event for me every day.

***(3) As a Wild Weasel what are some of your life lessons?***

As a WW, I learned the true meaning of teamwork and trust, starting with my EWO in the Pit of the F-4G, to my flight mates and leadership. I trusted everyone I flew with,

and I trained hard to make sure they knew they could trust me. The WW community trained daily and realistically for the next war.

*(4) What have I missed you would like to add?*

I made many lifelong friends in my 22 years in the USAF, but the majority of those friendships was during my time as a Wild Weasel. Our community trained hard and partied hard and that build a deep comradery that has outlasted our time in the service and is part of our DNA!

**Wild Weasels... YGBSM!**



*Spot Taber in front of the USAF Weapons School!*

**A huge salute to Spot from Word from Willie not only for your active service but your continued service to your country! Thanks for all you do!**

**Wild Weasel History from Dave Brog**

## **I remember a time, many years ago, when there appeared in the skies of North Vietnam a Black SAM.**

No one had ever seen or heard of the Black SAM, but everyone had a suspicion of what it was. They did not think that it was the SA-2. The prevailing suspicion was that it was an SA-4. Many did not think that it was the SA-4, but that "many" could not prove that it was not. That "many" included a group of politically incorrect USAF majors who worked in the Pentagon. These majors were non-PC, because they were all above the rank any of them ever expected to be and were very mission oriented. They were Bob Klimek and Lou Chesley from the R&D side, Jim Thompson and Leon Hoffman from the LG side and Jack Donovan and myself from Ops.

We all recognized the limitations of the AN/APR-36/37 RWRs, which were hardwired and could not be changed with the threat. We had already seen the SA-3s used in the Middle East and the growth of SAM threats in the Warsaw Pact. We had no RWR in USAFE, or anywhere, that could see the newer threats. We did, however, have a system in R&D, nicknamed Mongoose, which was a digital RWR processor built by a west-coast company called Dalmo Victor (DV). Unfortunately, we were moving very slowly in development and testing.

"Aha," said the Majors. This new Black SAM might be bullshit, but it could be the horse to ride to get the digital reprogrammable RWR that we knew we needed for the future. So we caucused in the basement of the Pentagon, near the Purple Water Fountain, and agreed that we would push to the limit to get the digital RWR into the inventory.

The first step was to get with the Warner Robins Air Logistic Center and its Ace EW software engineer, Joe Black, to find out what it would take to get DV to speed up its effort. He told us the amount of money and time that we would need and what had to be done. This was March 1972, and if everything went right we could have the first operational install into the F-105G in January 1973. The F-4Es would follow. We then had to find the money. So Klimek and Thompson started to root around for the dollars. The R&D dollars were easier to find. Jim Thompson had the hard job, finding Class-5 mod money for the installs. He finally found the dollars by robbing the usual sitting pots, T-38 windscreen mods and F-4 smokeless-engine mods, which almost always sat number one and two on the Class-5 mod list priorities but never got funded. It was a wonderful petty cash fund.

Once we got the funding lined up, we decided to find out what kind of priority we could get to move the program. Fortunately, we had a colonel named Howard Leaf (bless his good heart) heading up the special SEA/Mid-East emergency requirement effort. We went to him, and he said to go to a certain colonel and ask him to give you a "DX Brickbat" priority — the highest priority in DOD. We got it and drafted the message that we intended for General Jack Ryan, then CSAF, to sign out to get the this program

going. Within a week we had 19 general officers across the Air Staff to coordinate. There were some staff officers who did not want to concur — not the generals, but the colonels and below. We would not, however, accept a simple non-concurrence. We said that if they did not agree with the message, they should write a letter of non-concurrence explaining their reasons, and we would take their letter with us to the next level of coordination. Interestingly enough, all the non-concurrenrs backed off. Ryan signed the message, and we were on our way.

The next step was to get some flight testing once we had the system ready. We knew that using the system in Europe would be a hit/miss proposition. We didn't know if the Warsaw Pact would cooperate and turn on the threats when we flew by the border. We did know that the Israeli Air Force was seeing the SA-2C (the G-band version) and the SA-3 on a daily basis. I decided to ask the IAF if they would be willing to flight test the new digital RWR, now called the AN/ALR-46, against the threat along the Suez canal and in Egypt. Their response was "Yes, but." I asked what is the "but?" They replied, "We want it, too." I very shortly got the Air Staff and powers that be to agree that in return for flight testing, the IAF would be allowed to get the ALR-46 for their F-4Es.

In August 1972, we put a team together consisting of DV engineers and Warner Robins engineers, led by John Lavecchia. In three weeks they installed the ALR-46 and flew enough flights to determine that the ALR-46 worked as advertised. We started the procurement and had the first ALR-46 in an F-105G in SEA in January 1973.

And the rest, as they say, is history.

Thanks to Dave Brog for sharing our Weasel History and showing what a high-performance team can do—well done Dave!!

## **Links of Interest**

*In this section we will periodically scan links for reading recommendations.*

[Pentagon: Video shows US airstrikes in eastern Syria | | oleantimesherald.com](#)

[What the Israeli Air Force Has in the Sky - FLYING Magazine](#)

### **Next Issue**

- (1) *Interview with Paul "Sluggo" Meyer WW #2562 on advanced technology*
- (2) *Interview with Brig Gen (Ret) Phillip Drew WW#346 on running an Electronic Combat Air Division*



(3) *Dave Melton's interview with Dave Brog on Israel and their support to the US*

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## ***ANNEX A—River Rats 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and the opening of the Museum in Bowling Green***



**Bob Pardo & Dave Brog showing the F-4 wind screen, representing Pardo's Push of Earl Aman out of NVN on 10 March 1967**

[Pardo's Push - Wikipedia](#)



***Dave Brog looking dapper!***



**Stanry, Pontiff oversees a fine-looking F-105 Wild Weasel model at the  
Museum**