

# 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Association Newsletter



27th



71st



94th

Volume 31 No. 1

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## Maintainers, volunteers spearhead Nieuport 28 restoration

By Vic Johnston  
633rd Air Base Wing Public Affairs

**LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, Va.** – May 24, 2011 is a date Chief Master Sgt. David Brown will not soon forget. A potentially violent storm was headed directly for Langley Air Force Base, Va. The 94th Aircraft Maintenance Unit superintendent and fellow maintenance technicians were scrambling to hangar and secure the 1st Fighter Wing's F-22 Raptor fleet. The unit's iconic symbol, a Nieuport 28 World War I biplane replica, was anchored at five spots to the concrete pad just outside the chief's office.

At 6 p.m., just before the technicians could get to the biplane, a microburst swept in, snapping the rear chain, bolts and cable, which sent the airplane that was never supposed to fly 100 feet into a parked flat-bed truck. A twisted pile of metal and wood, smashed wings and propeller were what remained.

Some SPADS, a nickname for members in the unit, were sure the storm had damaged the

airplane beyond repair. E-mails from present and former SPADS flew through the ether, spreading the sorry news about the Nieuport's demise. A proposal to buy a new SPAD XIII or another Nieuport replica were considered, but the price was prohibitive; it could be as much as \$15,000 -- unassembled. (Continued on Page 5)



<http://www.ible.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123288478>

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## Racquet's Corner



*Racquet and Kathy Hardenbrook with Gen Hostage, Commander, Air Combat Command (February 16, 2012) (Gen Hostage is a former 71<sup>st</sup> FS Commander and Operations Officer as well as 27<sup>th</sup> FS Assistant Operations Officer)*

I am pleased to say that your Association has been proactively pursuing activities that keep the Association at the forefront of both the active Wing and Association members. It has been a busy time since the last Newsletter.

First, Kathy and I were honored to represent the Association at a joint Daedalian's and AFA dinner honoring Air Combat Command and Gen. Mike Hostage, ACC Commander. I had the opportunity to speak with Gen Hostage and familiarize him with the Association. Since he is a former 71<sup>st</sup> Commander he is eligible for Association membership, however I think it will take a little more work before he joins.

During this period both Squadrons changed commanders. Both new commanders are already Association members and we extend our congratulations to Lt Col Jason Hines (former Maloney's Pony Aircraft Commander) the new 94<sup>th</sup> Commander and Lt Col "Caveman" Craddock, the new 27<sup>th</sup> Commander.

We can all be very proud of our Association and our members' contribution to the 94<sup>th</sup> Spad restoration project. Led by the 71<sup>st</sup> Squadron President, Jon "Goldie" Goldenbaum, the restoration was a complete success. Without his help the project could not have been finished

within the necessary time and cost constraints. The Association's contribution was recognized during the Spad unveiling ceremony during the 94<sup>th</sup> Change of Command ceremony. Please read the associated Newsletter article, contributed by Association member Vic Johnson for more details.

Each year, during the Annual Wing Awards Ceremony, your Association awards Wing members three highly cherished Awards: Expeditionary Airman of the Year, Expeditionary Officer of the Year and Fighter Pilot of the Year. Ten Association members attended and saw the Awards presented to three very deserving recipients. See details in the accompanying Newsletter article.

The Association's Board began one of the key initiatives discussed at the last Reunion business meeting, namely proactively pursuing new members, both Officer and enlisted. I have been in discussions with Wing leadership to offer membership to squadron officers, with Commander's approval, upon PCS and to enlisted personnel, with approval, when they retire. We are in the very early stages with more discussion to go. I have asked Randy "Mopar" Dodge to assist the Board with some of the associated work load.

We have appointed Randy to the newly created Board position of "Enlisted Advisor." So far, he is doing a great job staying up on all the details. The initiative has good Wing support, however, with this support comes the associated administrative costs including the free one year membership; certificate purchases and distribution; squadron lapel pins; and the drain on limited manpower to attend and present all the membership certificates. These are good problems to have, but still problems that must be solved.

The wonders of the Internet continue to amaze me. Due to the great job that Pete continues to

do on our website, we are getting noticed. I recently received correspondence from Dr. Iain Barnes, Director, RAF Ibsley Airfield Heritage Trust, who saw our website and asked if any of our members could fill him in on the details of the short time that the 71<sup>st</sup> and 94<sup>th</sup> were stationed at Ibsley before deploying to North Africa. With the vivid memories of folks like Mac MacAllister, Vince Rethman and Bernie Muldoon, we were able to fill in some of the blanks. Dr. Barnes agreed to write an article on his organization for this Newsletter. Please feel free to contact Dr. Barnes if you have any war stories you can share on your Ibsley Field experiences. We plan to stay in touch.

Lastly, we are still trying to tie all the pieces together on the Association, future activities, reunions, etc. and what needs to be done to guarantee the viability of this organization into the future. To that end I asked Bill Roege to run an analysis of where all our members live so we can plan future activities more central to our members. Bill did a great job and we learned that we are now primarily an East Coast organization with the largest number of members residing in VA. This is useful info to know.

Additionally, one of the actions coming out of the last reunion was a recommendation to create a survey so we can better understand our members, how you view the Association, and what you want to see as the future direction of the Association. Pete will be sending out a Constant Contact email shortly with the survey, please take the time to fill it out and let us know what you think. Thanx.

Check 6

*Racquet*

## Notes from the Secretary

The 2012 Membership Drive is wrapping up. To date, we have 330 Association members including 32 new member awardees who supported the Nieuport restoration. If you haven't sent in your dues for 2012, now is the time to do so. I want to give a special shout out to the following members who contributed to the 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Association Endowment Fund this year. The interest earned from the Fund helps defray the costs of many important Association activities such as the Annual Expeditionary Awards.

### **2012 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Association Endowment Fund Contributors**

Hank Goddard	Bill Roege
Wilby Evans	Bruce Gordon
Bill Goodrich	David Ingleman
John Delianedis	E. D. Shaw III
Ray Cleary	Chuck Wilson
Rosalyn Nolen	Richard L. Follett Sr.
Joseph Boyd	Arnold Megenity
George Wallace	Cyril Williams
Richard Rice	Robert Vrillakas
Bob Correia	James Cullen
Bob Riley	Jack Marvin

Remember to keep your personal information up to date by sending changes to me at [1stfighter@comcast.net](mailto:1stfighter@comcast.net).

Cheers,

*Pete*

## In Remembrance

Pat Munro of Salinas, CA wrote a nice Christmas card with some sad news:

*"Warren K. Munro passed away at his home after a courageous battle with cancer on Oct. 15, 2011.*

*He was a member of the 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Group in the 71<sup>st</sup> Fighter Squadron during World War II and in the Air Force Reserves during the Korean War.*

*We attended many of the Group's Reunions and enjoyed every one of them. Warren was very proud of his service and the many friends he had made. We had 63 happy years together.*

### **Upcoming Event:**

27th FS Reunion  
July 20-21, Nashville, TN  
Contact Moose Moore  
[eaglemoose@aol.com](mailto:eaglemoose@aol.com)  
(615) 300-2763



F-22A Raptor from 27<sup>th</sup> Fighter Squadron  
(USAF Photo)

## Nieuport 28 Restoration

(Continued from Page 1)

Brown and his fellow SPADS considered the historic significance of this particular model though.

"It is too important to the unit," said Brown, because it had been their symbolic material tie to the 94th's storied past, where mentions of Douglas Campbell, Raoul Lufbery and Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker reached almost legendary proportions.



*U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Jason Kraener, 94th Aircraft Maintenance Unit aircraft section chief, and Master Sgt. Aaron Cowan, 94th AMU production superintendent, rebuild the Nieuport 28 replica at Langley Air Force Base, Va., Jan. 17, 2012. The restoration project at Langley AFB involves select Airmen using skills rarely employed in today's Air Force. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Kayla Newman/Released)*

### Way ahead

Word of the ruinous tumble the biplane suffered reached members of the 1st Fighter Association, who posted before and after pictures in their August on-line newsletter.

Ken Kellett, a long-time aircraft replica builder and restorer built the aircraft in 1983 and it was dedicated at Langley in 1984. His reaction when he saw the pictures were "Ouch! I think they can fix this.

"What's amazing is that it's 28 years old and has held up as well as it has. It looks like it can be made whole again," said Kellett.

Staff Sgts. Javaris Allen and Zach Kee, both dedicated crew chiefs in the 1st Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, took the lead. It would be the third time the aircraft had undergone repairs, but this would be the first time 94th AMU mechanics would do the work.

Allen set up a woodworking workshop in a storage room off of the main 94th AMU Hangar. Although cramped, he and other volunteers set about reverse engineering the smashed replica. Taking apart the wings, they spied dry rot and cracks. Tracing the old parts, they made new ones. Now a table saw, jig saw and sandpaper would become their new tools of the trade.

"I had just done furniture repair up until this point, so this was different," Allen said.

Ribs, wing struts, spars and each old part of the airplane had to be removed, traced and re-made. The 1st Maintenance Squadron helped out as well, using the slowly emerging rebuilt aircraft as a training aid, building a new rudder and tail feather assembly.



*U.S. Air Force Airman 1st Class Christopher Morrison, 94th Aircraft Maintenance Unit avionics specialist, applies the skin to a wing of the Nieuport 28 replica at Langley Air Force Base, Va., Jan. 17, 2012. The French-made Nieuport was among one of the first aircraft to be taken into battle by the 94th Fighter Squadron at Langley AFB. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Kayla Newman/Released)*

An Airframe and Powerplant Certification is required to perform maintenance and repairs on small aircraft, as well as the largest jet airplanes. A portion of the required A&P curriculum an aircraft maintenance professional needs to get certified includes working with wood, metal, fabric and composites. Many



aircraft maintenance professionals strive to attain the certification.

"This is a great experience, a good change of pace, working with these tools and fiberglass," said Master Sgt. Richard Soule, 372nd Field Training Detachment instructor, also emphasizing the bonus benefits of getting the A&P certification.

As of press time, the aircraft has received its silver coating on the fuselage, to protect the coverings from the destructive effects of ultraviolet light. The detailed five-color paint scheme will culminate the restoration process.



*Retired U.S. Air Force Col. Jon Goldenbaum, second from right, helps Airmen of the 94th Aircraft Maintenance Unit restore a Nieuport 28 replica at Langley Air Force Base, Va., Jan. 17, 2012. Goldenbaum was stationed at Langley AFB in the 1980's and participated in the original dedication ceremony when the Nieuport 28 model was unveiled. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Kayla Newman/Released)*

### **A donation of valuable skills and material**

Jon Goldenbaum was here during the 1984 dedication of the Nieuport. The retired Air Force colonel was the 27th FS assistant operations officer, then the 94th FS operations officer, and subsequently the commander of the 71st FS. Although his military background is in F-15 Eagles, he was interested in the project.

"My background and passion was in restoring and flying antique aircraft," he said. While stationed here, he had a fabric-covered Taylorcraft BC-12D that he flew as a hobby.

Now he is the president of Consolidated Aircraft Coatings in Riverside, Calif. Last summer he wrote an e-mail to Brown stating, "I'll donate all

the fabric, coatings and custom-tinted, mil-spec paint necessary to make it look like new. I'll be glad to teach whoever is available how to apply the fabric, coatings and paint."

According to the retired Eagle driver, you can't learn these skills at an Air Force tech school. A stickler for authenticity, he wants the rebuild to look just right. "The paint we use exactly duplicates the luster of the nitrate dope used in World War I."

"Goldy," Brown, Allen and a team of 11 volunteer restorers started the next phase of the Nieuport's rebirth in earnest on Jan. 16, the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday. Their actions cementing the notion the day is "A day on, not a day off." Even Tech. Sgt. Nate Kramer's wife Bobbi Jo pitched in, doing some fine sanding.



U.S.

*Air Force Airman 1st Class Ismael Debarros, 94th Aircraft Maintenance Unit F-22 Raptor crew chief, takes part in rebuilding the Nieuport 28 replica at Langley Air Force Base, Va., Jan. 17, 2012. The original replica of the Nieuport 28 was destroyed by a storm on May 24, 2011. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Kayla Newman/Released)*

### **Legacy, history, heritage**

James Hardenbrook, former 27th FS commander and presently the 1st Fighter Association president, was glad veterans of the wing could be a part of the Nieuport's restoration process.

"The association charter is based upon making significant contributions to the history and heritage of the 1st Fighter Wing," said Hardenbrook. "This program fits that charter like a glove. Many of our members, especially former WWII 94th members, were quick to take out their checkbooks to ensure that restoration

got started as quickly as possible."

Both present and past 1st FW members were especially pleased Goldenbaum provided his professional expertise, and all the material to recover, paint and finish the restoration to better-than-new condition.



*Airmen assigned to the 94th Aircraft Maintenance Unit build a Nieuport 28 replica at Langley Air Force Base, Va., Jan. 17, 2012. The original Nieuport 28 replica was put on display in front of the 94th AMU in 1984, and has since gone through two restorations, two location moves, three mountings, and one final flight. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Kayla Newman/Released)*

A key expert who helped was a young man Goldenbaum hired out of the gang-ridden barrio that surrounds his business. He placed him along with others from similar backgrounds in a training program he runs within his business.

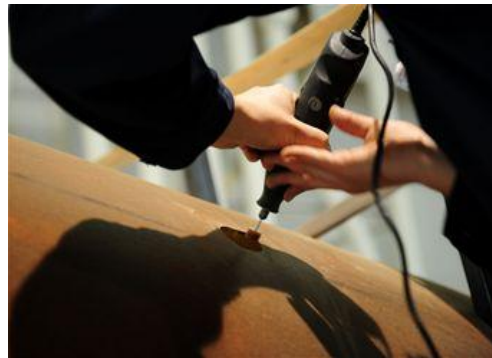
Hualdo Mendoza is now an aircraft restoration expert, comfortable in the business environment, articulate, and a contributing citizen in the local community.

"This restoration program is a success in many ways," according to Hardenbrook. The aircraft will soon be restored to better than new condition, and the esprit de corps of the 94th FS is once again confirmed. The contributions of the 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Association are recognized and this effort highlights the contributions of

Goldenbaum, not only to this program, but to his local community.

"I look forward to the roll out celebration and placement of the aircraft back where it belongs," said Goldenbaum.

The restored Nieuport will be revealed at the 94th FS change of command ceremony, scheduled for Feb. 9, at the SPAD hangar at 11:30 a.m. Lt. Col. Jason Hinds will assume command from Lt. Col. David Abba.



*U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Jason Kraener, 94th Aircraft Maintenance Unit aircraft section chief, smooths the edges of the Nieuport 28 replica at Langley Air Force Base, Va., Jan. 17, 2012. Retired U.S. Air Force Col. Jon Goldenbaum provided the fabric, coatings and custom tinted military specification paint to the restoration of the Nieuport 28. (U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Kayla Newman/Released)*

## **The RAF Ibsley Airfield Heritage Trust**

By Iain Barnes

On August 27, 1942, as part of Operation Bolero, a contingent of the 1st Fighter Group of the 8th USAAF, N<sup>os</sup> 71 and 94 Squadrons, touched down at an RAF airfield in the New Forest on England's south coast.

They spent three months there, flying their P38s on sorties along the English Channel and into Nazi occupied Europe, under the Station Command of Col. John N. Stone.

Although the wartime runways are long gone, and the airfield is now mostly lakes and a haven for wildlife, there are still a few buildings and infrastructure left behind – including the Control Tower and the reserve Battle Headquarters.

Last year, a local group interested in the story of the airfield, formed a charitable company, the RAF Ibsley Airfield Heritage Trust, with the aim of preserving the buildings and recording the stories of those who served there.

The ambition of the Airfield Heritage Trust is to restore the Control Tower to near its original condition as a wartime watch office, while also serving as an education centre housing memorabilia and interactive displays.

To help bring the past to life, the Trust wants to record and tell the stories of the US air and ground crews who served at Ibsley during the war, and what it was like for them to come to a different country, at war for three years, and to find themselves in the middle of a rural community existing on meagre rations and clothing coupons.

My role with the Trust is to collect these stories as part of our Oral History project - and this is where I hope you as readers might help.

If you served with the 71<sup>st</sup> or 94<sup>th</sup> or are related to someone who did, do you have any records, photographs, flight logs, mementos, anecdotes, or just a memory you would like to share - all would be most appreciated. Indeed, if you did serve here you might be willing to talk to me about your memories – I have already spoken with a few members of the 48th Fighter Group via telephone and Skype which has been a pleasure and a privilege.

Recently, I have been sent:

- A photograph of a P38 arriving at Ibsley by an English Spitfire pilot stationed at Ibsley at the same time (illustrated).
- A cartoon drawn by Sergeant Simpson of the 71st Squadron (also pictured), this is from an autograph book held by a local garage and they would love to learn more about him via myself.
- I have also been sent some of Sergeant Erwin Gilmore's (71st Squadron). memoirs
- Extracts from Mr. Rethman's diary for his time here at Ibsley.

But we would like to know so much more!

If you or anyone you know served at RAF Ibsley, we really would be delighted to hear from you.

Please visit our website to read a bit more about us and what the Trust is trying to achieve: <http://www.ibsleytower.info>.



You can contact me via email at: [rafibsley@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:rafibsley@yahoo.co.uk) or by post at:

The Willows  
Mockbeggar Lane  
Ibsley, Ringwood, Hampshire  
England, BH24 3PR

I very much look forward to hearing from you.

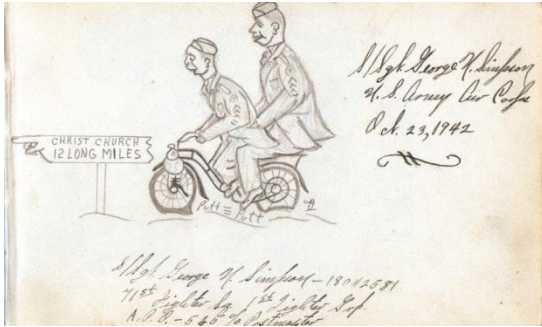


*Artist's impression of Ibsley Control Tower as it would have looked in 1944 when the USAAF 48<sup>th</sup> Fighter Group was stationed there.*



*A photograph of one of 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Group's P38s arriving at Ibsley in 1942. Taken by a RAF 66 Sqn pilot stationed there at the time.*





A page from an autograph book belonging to the owners of Wells Garage in Ringwood, UK. Drawing by, and autograph of S/Sergeant George Simpson of the 71<sup>st</sup> Sqn.



Ibsley Control Tower today.

## 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Association Expeditionary Awards

**January 13, 2012** – The 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Association presented its 2011 Expeditionary Awards at the annual 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Wing Awards Ceremony. The awards are given to the outstanding expeditionary enlisted, officer (non-aviator) and officer (aviator) each year. This year Racquet joint 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Wing commander Col. Kevin Robbins and Senior Enlisted Advisor CMSgt. Gary Carter in presenting the awards. This year's winners are shown in the photos below: Enlisted, MSgt. Shane Faulkwell; Officer, non-aviator, Capt. Kimberly Templer; and Officer, aviator, Capt. Jerod Rife.



Photos by USAF SSgt. Jeffrey Nevison

## Association Needs More Enlisted Members

By Randy Dodge.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Association has always been an organization open to ALL personnel who have ever served as part of the 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Wing, regardless of rank or position.

However, frankly, to this point we have not done a very good job in making sure that this fact is common knowledge among former enlisted personnel. This is reflected in our membership rolls, which show that our current membership is made up mostly of pilots. In

recent years, the importance of “recruiting” more former and current enlisted personnel into the 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Association has become more and more apparent. For instance, currently I believe I am still the only maintainer from the F-15A era that is an active member.

Recently, I am proud to say, the leadership of the 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Association has been taking great strides in making sure the word gets out that we welcome all maintainers, and support troops to be an active part of our organization. To this end, the Association has done several things to initiate this “surge” in enlisted membership. In June of 2011, we awarded 1-year memberships to the Dedicated Crew Chief of the F-22A Raptor “Maloney’s Pony”, SSGT Nicholas Banks and his entire ground crew. In February of this year just prior to the 94<sup>th</sup> FS Change of Command ceremony, we awarded 32 new memberships to all the maintainers who played a role in repairing & restoring the 94<sup>th</sup>s Nieuport static display aircraft. These memberships were presented to A1Cs all the way up to Chief Master Sergeants, and increased our membership by almost 10% with one stroke.

However, this is only the tip of the iceberg. The Association is currently researching the use of Facebook as a tool to stay in communication with the current Fighter Squadrons and Aircraft Maintenance Units. We hope that this will help us to continue to update those troops on Association activities, as well as promote continued membership in the organization. This can also be used as a tool to reach former 1<sup>st</sup> FW maintainers who use Facebook, and are currently part of their respective Squadron pages. Eventually, we would like to initiate a 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Association page on Facebook for all current and prospective members of all ranks.

Being as this is “our” Association, it is up to all of us to help any way we can to help offset the parity of officer to enlisted members. In that vein we need all current members and Squadron Officers to network with any maintainers that you know, who are not yet a member, and show them how important maintaining the continued legacy of the 1<sup>st</sup>

Fighter Wing is, especially from the ground crews.

The Association leadership is also researching whether the creation of a new position on the Board for an “Enlisted Advisor” is warranted. The proposed job description for this position is as follows:

- The 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Association Enlisted Advisor [EA] will serve the association board and squadron presidents in an advisory capacity, ensuring the leadership and members are aware of the increased priority being placed upon growing overall association enlisted membership.
- The Enlisted Advisor will work with the association Secretary/Treasurer and squadron presidents with maintaining an up to date and accurate list of the new enlisted members and will work with association leadership to ensure that each new member is welcomed into the association in a manner which encourages continued association membership year to year.
- The EA will be responsible for suggesting improved communication options with the members to include “Facebook” and other means to sustain interest in the association throughout the year.
- The EA (with association leadership approval) will maintain open lines of communication with the active duty individual unit enlisted leadership of the 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Wing to encourage awareness, support, and membership of the 1<sup>st</sup> Fighter Association and its mission.

Your input to the Association Board on these initiatives is greatly appreciated.

## 94<sup>th</sup> FIS Cold War Adventure

By Bruce Gordon

In September 1969 an incident occurred which relates to the Cold War and is not yet known to the general public. National Security Council records have been declassified which confirm that Russia nearly attacked China. The NSC

records tell of Henry Kissinger's activities, but do not say anything about our military involvement. In April 2010 a Chinese historian wrote in "History and Reference" on <http://www.people.com.cn> that this was the most unprecedented crisis of war since the founding of the Communist state; the translation is so poor that I can only get the gist of what was said. I am writing this to the First Fighters so this threat of war will not disappear from history.



94<sup>th</sup> FIS Aircraft over near Korea in 1969  
Photo by Bruce Gordon

I was flying F-106 fighters with the 94<sup>th</sup> Fighter Interceptor Squadron in Osan, Korea, in late September 1969 and I can add to the story what I personally saw. Our forces in Korea were suddenly put on a high state of alert for "an exercise". In real exercises we fly the planes as much as possible. In this "exercise", we were directed not to fly or even to run engines to check the aircraft systems. Korean nationals were refused entry to our base, so hundreds of Korean workers were kept off the base. Even our normal supply aircraft were cancelled. A strange quiet settled over the base for a week or two, as no aircraft flew and no engines were started.

I read the newspapers carefully, and noted that a Japanese reporter said that all the American submarines had left Okinawa and for the first time in years that there were no submarines in port. I saw a newspaper comment that an American aircraft carrier had left Jacksonville, Florida in such a hurry that it left many of its crew on shore, and they were being ferried out to the aircraft carrier somewhere in the Atlantic. Then I got a letter from my wife saying

that as she was driving past our home Alert hangars at Selfridge AFB, Michigan, she noted something strange. The hangars had been vacant since we left for our 6-month TDY in Korea, but now there were F-106's from a different squadron, apparently on Alert in our home hangars! That probably meant that our fighter squadrons in the USA had been dispersed to all available bases, so they couldn't be knocked out as easily by missile strikes. Apparently all US military forces were on a heightened state of alert, but the alert was not mentioned to the US public.

Weeks passed, and gradually the alert conditions were relaxed. A few aircraft were allowed to fly in much-needed parts, and we could do engine runs to check aircraft. We couldn't fly normal missions, but we could fly active air defense missions. It was early October 1969. I was on Alert, and got a SCRAMBLE order. My wingman and I climbed to 41,000 feet altitude and were vectored northeast, over the Sea of Japan. We flew between North Korea and Vladivostok, Russia. A Russian aircraft was there, but turned back as we came to intercept him (it was over international waters, so anyone had a right to be there).

We turned around to go back to Osan, and I saw a flotilla of warships far beneath me. I knew they were warships because they were much sleeker than cargo ships. I asked for, and received, permission to go down for a look. I left my wingman at high altitude to serve as a radio relay with Korea (we were a long way from Osan) and I dove down to sea level.

There were about seven warships, almost dead in the water moving just enough to keep control of the ships. A fishing boat was leaving the flotilla at high speed, heading toward North Korea. A FISHING BOAT at HIGH SPEED??

Fishing boats don't have powerful engines yet this one was leaving a wake like a speedboat! I guessed that it must be one of those North Korean warships, disguised as fishing boats that I had heard of. I was curious, so I first flew to the fishing boat. It suddenly slowed as I approached. I couldn't see anyone on deck. I

circled for another look, but it now looked like a regular fishing boat.

I next turned toward the fleet. They weren't American ships, so they must be Russian nobody else would have such a fleet. They had big numbers painted on their bows, so I wrote down the numbers. I had a camera that Intelligence had put in our fighters, so I took pictures.

It was international water, so I had a right to be there but I was careful not to fly in a way that could be seen as threatening to their ships. I got very low over the water, slowed down to minimum safe speed, turned so I would fly through the fleet, and turned on my autopilot. I took pictures as I passed a small ship, then came close to the biggest ship in the fleet – a cruiser – a beautiful ship. The crew was on deck there were brown uniforms on the lower decks, but the bridge had many white uniforms. I was looking through my camera viewfinder when I saw that the big guns on the ship had been turned on me!

I could understand that! I was so close that they could easily have shot me down! I turned away immediately and started climbing back to join my wingman. We received a message from Osan Air Base: RETURN TO BASE IMMEDIATELY AND REPORT TO THE COMMANDER.

I was very excited about what I had seen, and went to the command post promptly. A Colonel was waiting for me, and he was VERY ANGRY. I told him exactly what had happened, and that all my actions followed international law. He said that the Lieutenant who authorized me to go down for a look exceeded his authority. He had me sit down and write up my account of the incident in a report that was to be sent straight to the Pentagon. As he dismissed me, the Colonel angrily said: Major, you were meddling in something that was MUCH BIGGER THAN YOU!

Intelligence normally gave us copies of pictures that we took but this time Intelligence said all the photos had been "ruined in processing," and I never saw the photos. The "exercise"

slowly faded away. I said nothing more to anyone about the incident for twenty years, when I started looking for explanations for what I had seen.

I researched news magazines (TIME and NEWSWEEK) from that time period, and found that Russia and China were having very bad relations. An "incident" on the Amur River boundary between China and Russia resulted in a battle in which many Russians were killed. Reporters said that the Chinese had turned the sewers of Beijing into a defensive tunnel works, with gunports at the storm sewer street drains. I read that the Russians had expelled all the Chinese nuclear scientists, who were studying in Russia, and put them all on a plane headed back to China. The plane crashed, killing the scientists. The Chinese claimed their scientists were murdered.

I read an excerpt from a book by one of Richard Nixon's aides which said that the USA had found out that the USSR had decided to attack China before the Chinese could fully develop their nuclear strike capability. The USA had advised the USSR to keep hands off of China, and that, if war broke out, the USA would probably support China.

Now it all suddenly made sense! The strange "exercise" – with the submarines sent to sea, the aircraft carriers deployed, our fighters dispersed to wartime bases and keeping Koreans off of our bases (it's hard to think of a better way to tell any spies that we're on a war footing!) this was something that THE RUSSIANS COULD EASILY SEE, BUT WHICH THE AMERICAN PUBLIC WOULD NOT SEE! Our "exercise" was a warning to the Russians, without telling the American people about it.

The flotilla of ships that I saw may have been a summit meeting between Russian commanders and North Koreans. The white uniforms on the bridge of the biggest ship the crew was gathered to honor some VIP from North Korea, and the officers were wearing their dress white uniforms! Perhaps key North Korean generals had been visiting the Russian ship, and were in the "fishing boat" heading back to North Korea



after conferring with the Russians about an invasion of China.

How real was the threat of war? In January 2010 <http://telegraph.co.uk> in an article titled "USSR planned nuclear attack on China in 1969," reported that Anatoly Dobrynin, the Soviet ambassador to Washington, told Brezhnev after consultations with US diplomats: "If China suffers a nuclear attack, they (the Americans) will deem it as the start of the third world war," Dobrynin said. "The Americans have betrayed us." I wonder was my flight over the Russian ships interpreted by the Russians as an indication of American resolve and helped influence the Russians NOT to attack China?

## MISSILE WARNING FLUSH!

By Bruce Gordon

It was the height of the Cold War. Russia was building intercontinental ballistic missiles, and the USA had recently installed an ICBM detection system in Greenland. We in the 94<sup>th</sup> FIS at Selfridge were very aware of the threat of a surprise Russian ballistic missile attack. We were told that if incoming ballistic missiles were detected, we would have about 30 minutes to get off the ground before our base would be wiped out by a nuclear explosion. The words "MISSILE WARNING FLUSH" told us to get everything flyable off the ground as quickly as possible, and that those words would NEVER be used in practice.

It was a quiet "down" day at Selfridge. Maintenance was having training, and all our pilots were gathered in the Operations briefing room for "ground school" taking a written test. Suddenly the loudspeakers blared: "MISSILE WARNING FLUSH!"

We dropped our pencils and rushed to grab our helmets and parachutes. I ran to the nearest F-106, knowing that 80% of our aircraft were in commission at any moment, and almost all were fully fueled. I thought I could fly almost anything – I didn't care if the radar worked or not. I found a ladder and quickly climbed into

the cockpit – only to find that there was no ejection seat in the aircraft! No ejection seat meant that there was nothing to sit on - and no radio or oxygen connections. I simply could not fly that airplane, even if Russian missiles were on the way!

I ran around trying to find another airplane, and other pilots were also running around looking for something flyable. Then the word came – "Cancel the FLUSH – it was a false alarm." We stumbled back to Operations. I was Quality Control Officer, so I quickly called Maintenance to find out what had happened.

It was a "down" day, so Maintenance had towed most of our flyable aircraft out to the Alert Hangar and the crews were out there practicing missile uploads. The only aircraft near our Operations building were not flyable, and the flyable aircraft at the Alert Hangar got no pilots at all!

I learned a serious lesson from that incident. Even with a MISSILE WARNING FLUSH, the pilots should stay in Operations and wait for Maintenance to call in the tail numbers and locations of flyable aircraft. Even in the greatest possible emergency, we must think before we act.

In researching this event, I learned that there were a number of false missile warnings. Once it was a training exercise at NORAD Headquarters that accidentally showed up on the live air defense screens at the Headquarters and caused bombers to be launched. It was finally stopped by the Secretary of Defense, who asked for confirmation – other sources showed no threats. There were five erroneous warnings in one eight-month period!

What if the President had authorized launch of our own ballistic missiles in retaliation against Russia? We would have had World War III by mistake! One of the advantages of bombers over missiles is that bombers can be launched and then recalled – while missiles cannot be recalled.



*Ibsley's location in England*



OVER VIRGINIA (AFPN) - An F-15 Eagle, F/A-22 Raptor and P-51 Mustang train for heritage flight formation flying here April 27 [2005]. Maj. Michael Shower, piloting the F/A-22, is getting his checkout ride for the formation with P-51 Pilot Maj. Gen. Mike Decuir, the Air Combat Command operations director, and Capt. Jason Costello, a 1st Fighter Wing demonstration team pilot. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Ben Bloker)

*"Son, you're going to have to make up your mind about growing up and becoming a pilot. You can't do both"*

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Place stamp  
here