

# WARBIRD FLYER



Roger Collins' latest acquisition! Photo: Dan Shoemaker



★ Cascade Warbirds Squadron Newsletter ★

## CO'S COCKPIT

By John "Smokey" Johnson



**THE LONG SUMMER DAYS** are winding down as we start to lose precious minutes of sunshine every day until we reach the equinox on September 22. The summer did offer a mix of scaled-down modified events, some that were fully operational, and some that were canceled. We had two gatherings early in the spring to try to get our members out together at Roger Collins' hangar in Bremerton. The first event was purely a social gathering with a burger

and hot dog lunch. The second gathering was designated as a "knock off the rust day" for the squadron to simulate and practice air show operations, in the hope that we might have a normal summer season.

Soon after, though, the Olympic Airshow, normally held on Father's Day weekend, was canceled. As the Delta variant of COVID-19 started to spread, the events that followed modified their formats to be remotely viewed. Participation by Cascade Warbirds pilots and members was voluntary, and there was no formal presence. This included the events at Tacoma Narrows Airport's Wings and Wheels and Arlington.

In late July, numerous Cascade Warbirds members traveled to attend EAA AirVenture, which was scheduled to operate under normal conditions. We all stayed at the two rented homes located just north of downtown Oshkosh on beautiful Lake Winnebago. The event was well attended by exhibitors, airshow performers, and warbird aircraft, and the crowds were near record levels for the airshow's duration. It was very nice to attend an event that had an "old normal" feel. Nice to see people's faces smiling and enjoying the big show at Oshkosh. CWB members Bob Stoney and Dave Desmon flew their respective warbirds to Oshkosh for the event. Stoney's Cessna L-19 won Returning Best in Class. Our XO, Dave Desmon, had the honor of leading the entire JLFC flight during the airshow and participated as number three in the missing man formation for our longtime friend and former JLFC president, Tom Gordon. It was a great time, and I hope we can do it again next year.

I did not fly in the Reno Air Races this year as the new SNJ-5 I purchased has a 1941 original U.S. Navy overhaul engine with 1100 hours on the motor mounts right now. Probably not the best idea to race an 80-year-old WWII engine at Reno. I didn't want to be that guy who had to call a mayday and hope I could make a runway and land safely. Maybe next year? Our own Dan Shoemaker was a pylon

judge this year and we hope to hear his perspective from out on the course, to hopefully include some unique photos. It is a very different experience and view from the pylons with the race aircraft passing at minimal height and high speeds.

After a couple of weeks and numerous email exchanges, the Museum of Flight management announced that everyone would have to show proof of vaccination to enter the building. So, the CWB Executive Board decided to cancel our in-person meetings in October and November.

If the potential for the spread of the COVID-19 Delta variant still exists and is a possibility for seniors and those at risk, even with the existing vaccines, it didn't seem like the best plan to fill a room with our members and put them at risk. If there is a remote possibility of infecting even one of our members with the virus, I feel we should wait until public health officials declare the risk of infection is minimal. At that time, we will resume in-person meetings and gather in a safe environment. We will check in December and see how things are progressing. It is my hope that we can all gather for the Christmas party, but we'll have to wait and see.

Please take care of yourselves. Check in on your friends to make sure they are doing well, and that they or you aren't going off the deep end because of continued isolation and the further economic devastation to all the local businesses in our small communities. Support those local businesses how and where you can. Stay active and engage your close friends; try to maintain your sanity. ★

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This is the official publication of Cascade Warbirds. The views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual writers, and do not constitute the official position of Cascade Warbirds. Members are encouraged to contribute any matter related to warbirds, which the editor will gladly work with you to publish.

It is the goal of Cascade Warbirds to promote the restoration, preservation, operation and public display of historically significant military aircraft; to acquire and perpetuate the living history of those who served their country on these aircraft; and to inspire today's young people to become the aviation pioneers of tomorrow.

All correspondence to the squadron may be submitted via the e-mail or mailing addresses below.

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Cascade Warbirds is a tax-exempt charitable organization as defined in section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Annual newsletter value: \$6.00

Published quarterly

www.cascadewarbirds.org

## NEW FACES

We welcome **Jay Bendlin** of Issaquah. He was a crew chief on MH-60 helos and aspires to become a pilot and acquire a CJ-6. Also on board is **Don Olsen** of Everett. He's an Alaska captain and looking for a Navion. Then there's **David Cohn** of Port Townsend. He owns a Commonwealth Skyranger and is a partner in a T-6. He's also a Collings P-51 volunteer CFI. Next is **Tera Flores** of Camas, whose daughter **Bianca** is a sophomore and student pilot. She trains at FLYIT Academy in Camas, with a goal to solo on her 16<sup>th</sup> birthday in December. Lastly is **Kyall Barrows** of White Salmon, whose daughter **Quinn** plans a career in aviation. She plans to start with glider certification, then go for her private ASEL, and finally attend the Air Force Academy.

We should also welcome back **Jay Lewis** of Spanaway, owner of a T-41D. He's been gone quite a while but recently saw the error of his ways. Guests in our Reno boxes, **Devan Odom**, spouse **Tracy**, and son **Jacen**, of St. Marys, GA, had so much fun that they have also joined. **Tom Wayne** of Langley is also with us. He's a retired flight test pilot with Northrup Grumman (among many other things) and a CFI S/MEL flying out of W10.

## SCHOLARS

Congratulations to **Alexandra “Alex” Szrama**, who was awarded our 2021 Continuing Aviation Education Grant in the amount of \$2,500. She is a student at Eastside Catholic School, a member of the CAP, and hopes to attend the Air Force Academy. We expect to hear much more of her in the years to come.

Our 2019 Grant winner, **Keith Steedman**, just finished his stage two flight check and is on track to earn his private certificate by the end of October.

Our 2020 Grant winner, **Harrison Pulido**, has finished his private pilot training. Unfortunately, he had to leave town for college before he found a DPE. He's now at Embry-Riddle in Daytona Beach and will get his check ride done this fall at the local FBO.

Our 2021 scholar, **Liam Mullins**, finished his ground school and both flights at partner **Galvin Flying** and is enrolled in the Big Bend Community College Commercial Pilot Program at Moses Lake.

**Gabriel Bacerdo**, a 2016 scholar, graduated from Purdue's Professional Flight Program and has returned to Seattle, now instructing at **Galvin Flying**.

Read more about both of these young men elsewhere in this issue.



Keith Steedman soloed on August 10, 2021.

Photo: Chan You

## 2022 SCHOLARSHIPS

Our 2022 scholarship season will open in early November and the application will be available online and at area high schools. Targeted at area youth and young adults in the age group 16–21, each awardee will be provided tuition for the private pilot ground school course, all books and supplies necessary to successfully complete that course, and two instructional flights. Any who complete their studying and flying by 30 Sep 22 and wish to pursue a career in aviation will be eligible to compete for a Continuing Aviation Education Grant in the amount of \$2,500. Be sure to mention this opportunity to any young folks whom you know or come in contact with. Full details are at [cascadewarbirds.org/youth/](http://cascadewarbirds.org/youth/).

## HOLIDAY UN-FESTIVITIES

We were saying “save the date”—11 Dec 21—for our annual Christmas dinner party. The venue was reserved and the money paid. However, between government and business requirements and

**ALTHOUGH THE AIRSHOW SEASON** was still being affected by attendance and operations restrictions this past summer, we were graced with three opportunities to fly and enjoy warbird camaraderie at Roger Collins' hangar facility at Bremerton.

After a BBQ in April, Roger hosted the multi-signatory FAST Northwest Formation Flying Clinic in August, which included instructors and check pilots from the Joint Liaison Formation Committee (JLFC) and RedStar. We even had a number of Canadian aviators brave the intricacies of cross-border travel bureaucracy to bring three Nanchang CJ-6s and a Yak-18 to

the clinic, where three new FAST cards, one FAST requal, and a bunch of proficiency flights were accomplished, even after a weather cancellation day at the start of the clinic. Even with all the rusty aviators in attendance, there was no swapped paint!

Roger Collins again hosted the warbird community at Bremerton during a Labor Day weekend military vehicle gathering. Thanks for your help and support this summer to keep our warbirds exercised, Roger, and congratulations on your full checkout in your P-51D *Lady Jo*.

Fly safe, by flying often! 🇺🇸

Photos: Dan Shoemaker

Thanks to Roger Collins for hosting a military vehicle and warbird Labor Day!

See the photo album—click the Flickr icon at [cascadewarbirds.org](http://cascadewarbirds.org):



the general risk of having a large group together in one room, we have unfortunately had to cancel. Keep your comm channels open for alternate options in the future.

DONATIONS UPDATE

We reported in the April issue the success of our Scholarship Fundraising Challenge and the prime movers who led to its success. Donations have continued throughout the intervening months, and the total now tops \$7,000. As you have read in this and other issues, this money plays an important part in the aviation aspirations of our area youth. They and the squadron thank you for your generosity.

There are other giving programs with which Cascade Warbirds is reg-

istered. The AmazonSmile program returns 0.5% of your purchases to us as a charitable contribution. Likewise, the Kroger Community Awards program remits to us a quarterly donation. If you're not supporting other organizations with your purchases at these companies, you might consider linking your shopping with them to our organization. Find more information at [cascadewarbirds.org/membership/](http://cascadewarbirds.org/membership/).

RENO 2022

If you're thinking about attending the races in 2022 and want to sit with us, you may want to reserve a seat now. Just \$100 per seat holds your place in line; contact Fred. FYI: as of 21 Sep 2021, seven seats are already spoken for.

AIRCRAFT AVAILABLE

Pilot and Vietnam veteran **Richard Kloppenburg** owns a restored 1967 O-2, *Saigon Tea*, that served in Vietnam. This is your chance to own a warbird and nice general aviation traveler. E-mail him for details at [kloppenburg@mac.com](mailto:kloppenburg@mac.com) and learn more at [cascadewarbirds.org/for-sale/](http://cascadewarbirds.org/for-sale/). 🇺🇸



1967 Vietnam veteran, O-2 *Saigon Tea*. Photo: Richard Kloppenburg

IT HAS BEEN A DECADES-LONG GOAL of mine to own and operate a military aircraft for the purpose of public display and educating folks about its role in our history. My search landed me with a 1969 O-2A sitting in a hangar at Wiley Post Airfield in Oklahoma City, fully disassembled. It is now in the second year of restoration and re-assembly, with a hopeful timeline of early 2022 for flight status. I have learned a great deal along the way and I have been enjoying the process. I hope to share some stories of the aircraft, the restoration, and how it became my project.

Why does a retired USMC Cobra pilot take on a USAF O-2A Skymaster? Answer: the Skymaster's mission. As a Cobra pilot, my responsibilities included Forward Air Control (Airborne), or FAC (A). I applied this skill during my tours in Afghanistan and Iraq. The O-2A's primary role was as a FAC (A) platform. Both the O-2A and the AH-1W were utilized for combat search and rescue. This aircraft did the same things I have done during my time as a Marine. I felt I would be able to accurately represent the plane and speak to its history, considering we walked the same paths, albeit in different conflicts. That's the nice answer. Another part of the answer may be that I'm an attack pilot. I wanted an attack aircraft, but can't afford a Cobra. With some good advice and conversation from members of the Cascade Warbirds, I started my search and narrowed the field. I ended up with an aircraft that I am passionate about, meets my objectives, and, best of all, can carry my whole family to an airshow!

Serial number 69-7642 began production in Wichita, Kansas in late 1969. She is late in the run of USAF O-2As, being number 440 of 467. It was completed on April 10, 1970, making this plane one year and nine days older than I am. It served with the USAF Reserve for one year at Grissom AFB (931<sup>st</sup> Tactical Air Support Group). It spent most of its life, ten years, with the Air National Guard in greater Peoria, Indiana (182<sup>nd</sup> TASG). She finished her time with five years at Patrick AFB in Florida (549<sup>th</sup> TASG). In July 1986, it went to the AMARC (now AMARG) at Davis-Monthan AFB for mothball storage. I acquired this aircraft history via a request to the Air Force Historical Research Agency, based at Maxwell AFB. The agency is very easy to work with, and I would highly recommend it.

Back to the point. In February, 1992 the airplane was dropped from the inventory and into the hands of Don Nieser. At that time, this plane was wearing the NATO woodland camouflage paint scheme and flew from Arizona to Wiley Post, where she would lay dormant again for almost twenty-five years.

Don is an interesting character and well-known in the Cessna 337/O-2 community. He has amassed most of the remaining O-2 parts that are out there. He continues to supply operators of these airplanes around the world. (There are a surprising number of contractors still using these aircraft for a variety of missions.) Don is "that guy" who, when asked about part "X," can rattle off the Cessna part number, original manufacturer, suitable replacement parts, etc., all off the top of his head. Don's collection of parts at his two hangars in Oklahoma is a case study in organized chaos. The quantity of parts he has in storage, by all measure, should not fit into that physical space. Somehow, they do; and somehow Don knows exactly where every widget, screw, box, and tool is, without blinking. This would become the stage for restoration of this O-2A. I am not going to pre-



Cessna O-2A s/n 69-7642 as it was near the beginning of restoration.

tend that I am doing all the work on this. Don is the master of ceremonies, and I am the hired help when I am there.

So why this exact one? Good question. There are some fine examples out there, but what was important to me was that the airplane be as close to its service configuration as possible. When some of the military planes were converted for their standard airworthiness certificates, the script for doing so left room for interpretation. Some operators removed components that are now rare finds. Retrofitting these items can be a very expensive option. This plane was still in the same configuration, with most of the same parts, as it was in 1986 when it went to the desert. Not only that, it was sitting amongst stacks of spares. It also helped considerably that my current employer has an office in Oklahoma City, where I often go to teach. The project may

be halfway across the country, but I have a reason to be there frequently.

Confession: 7642 was not my first choice. Don had another operational O-2A with lower engine times and still in its original configuration. It was his personal O-2A that he had been flying for years. Number 6880 was just what I wanted, but the week before I pulled the trigger on my decision it sold to a contract operator out of California. More on this later, but 7642 became my project. It was stripped to bare metal. The wings are off, the tail booms and empennage are off, the interior is empty, the engines were mid-to-upper time, and the props were sub-optimal. Zero curb appeal, and the perfect example of a “fixer-upper.” I decided to give it a green light and made my first visit to Oklahoma.

Early model 337s and many of the military O-2s were configured with threaded props. The manufacturer no longer produces parts for these threaded props. Since 69-7642 had these, I was committed to replace,



Well into the restoration, getting ready for paint.

not overhaul, when the time came. There are non-threaded props out there that can be overhauled with common parts. Some O-2s have them, and the part number is slightly different. Just before my first visit, I had a lucky strike. The outfit in California that purchased the O-2 ahead of me decided to swap engines/props with a non-flyable O-2 it owned. Don bought back those props and engines and assigned them to my project. Unexpectedly, I now had a full airplane, with lower time components than anticipated and the serviceable props I was hoping for.

#### **WINGS**

Working at the hangar in Oklahoma is like cheating. Within 200 feet, there are stacks of spare parts for almost anything you are working on. The first project I walked into was refitting the wings. They were off the

plane, stripped to bare metal, and Don was working the guts of them. The interior had been repainted, the wiring was being redone, and it was time to select replacement tanks. A quick aside: the O-2 tanks originally contained reticulated polyurethane foam for explosion suppression. The instructions for conversion to standard airworthiness suggested this be removed, but the option was there to keep it if it “did not appear deteriorated.” Ultimately, it will deteriorate, certainly after 50 years. The process to remove the foam required cutting the tanks open and welding them shut again.

Back to my project, and how to cheat. Don points to an area in the upper mezzanine and asks me to “pick out some tanks.” When I climbed to the top of the hangar and wove my way to the area I was directed to, I found four columns of fuel tanks stacked six feet high. All were O-2 tanks. I had my choice of color, weld quality, fuel cap style, number of dents, etc. It was like shopping at the outlet mall with too many choices, which is a good problem to have. I picked up some of the tanks that had not been cut open and could immediately hear/feel the deteriorated foam sliding around inside, like sand. I picked out tanks to my liking, and they are off for pressure testing and refitting.

#### **BOMB RACKS**

The inboard and outboard bomb racks are not interchangeable. The wing spars are not parallel, so the mounting points have different measurements. I learned that the inboard bomb racks are hard to come by. Many civilian operators removed them because they were inconvenient for loading and unloading the cabin. Most everyone kept the outboard bomb racks. I had stated earlier that this project was still mostly intact. The interior racks were one of the items cannibalized. The good news was that Don had the required individual parts to manufacture bomb racks, left over from the production line. Most of them were still

individually wrapped in their Cessna packaging. I squirreled away several sets and brought these back to Bellingham for assembly. Many thanks to an airframe guru I work with; we riveted together the racks with reference to the USAF tech manual. These are likely the last four “new” bomb racks to be made. I shipped them back to Oklahoma, two for my plane and two for a different project Don has already sold.

#### **EXPENSIVE STICKERS**

One of the items on the parts list for a bomb rack is a specific decal to mark the grounding point. The manual lists an NSN and part number. Don said good luck finding one, which is ominous coming from him. I was able to locate one example at a salvage yard in Kansas. They didn’t know exactly what it was, only that it had come to them from a hangar full of miscellanea. The

good news is I found one. The bad news is they had a minimum purchase policy, making this an expensive sticker. Hey, I got a “free” sweatshirt out of the deal. I took the original example to Image 360 in Burlington and they were able to replicate it as a high-quality vinyl decal. They, too, had a minimum quantity, much more than the four I actually needed. Does anyone need a bomb rack grounding point marker? I have stacks of them. I guess I’ll use them as zappers in the meantime.

#### **SOUNDPROOFING**

My next project was refinishing the cabin interior. The fuselage is mostly empty, a good time to sand, inspect, and repaint the interior walls. All the windows were coming out to be replaced, which helped significantly with ventilation. Over the course of my next two visits, I sanded from the front firewall to the aft firewall, inspecting for corrosion and removing the old soundproofing. I found near zero corrosion in the cabin. Storing it in the desert actually works. The soundproofing in much of the cabin was not much more than a thin rubber puck, glued to the wall. In the aft cabin, there were sheets of matted fiberglass soundproofing, which did not benefit from desert storage. One of the complaints about the 337 design is cabin noise. I know I stated that I wanted to keep things original, but this was an area where I was willing to deviate. The soundproofing will be behind the interior trim and out of sight. I opted to use modern foam soundproofing from Aircraft Spruce and Specialty. I am thinking I will end up with one of the quietest O-2As out there. This process involves sanding the airframe and cleaning it with a very pungent solvent. I then spray paint the area with zinc chromate. After it dries, I cut sections of foam to fit the bulkhead. I finish by using a super-tacky spray adhesive to apply the foam to the sheet metal.

#### **INTERIOR**

The military did not appoint the cabin with much of an interior. Installation of the radio rack in the back was done without consideration of ever removing the rear vinyl panel again. At least on my example, the radio rack shelves were riveted to the aft firewall, through the paneling. I needed to destroy the one-piece panel to get it out of the plane (without drilling the rack’s mounting points). I needed to do this to replace the soundproofing and treat the aft firewall sheet metal. Another thank-you to the Cascade Warbirds for offering several ideas and tips for getting this panel replicated in Washington. I have the original, plus a roll of military aviation upholstery fabric. I will take these, plus the other original interior panels, to a shop for replication. I hope to engineer the aft panel so it can be woven around the radio rack mounts when I reattach it. I can see the frustration of the airmen mechanics who worked on this plane. The interior panels are a hodgepodge of various paint overspray patterns, where these parts were left in place while other work was done.

#### **AVIONICS**

The good news is that I am trying to keep the panel



The rear radio station was a hodgepodge of military gear hiding overlapping patched panels, all of which needed attention. Top to bottom: before, during, and after the work.

and radios original. The bad news is that I am trying to keep the panel and radios original. There are spares to choose from, but each one of them is fifty years old. I

*(Continued on page 9)*

## 2021 SCHOLAR UPDATE

By Liam Mullins

I FINISHED GROUND SCHOOL and received my ground school certificate! Last Sunday, I did my second introductory flight at Galvin. My CFI was Gabriel Bacerdo, a former CWB scholar himself. I learned a lot from those two flights and the ground school program. Being behind the controls in the air made me even more sure that I want to pursue a career as a pilot!

In less than two weeks, I will move to Moses Lake to start my training in the Big Bend Commercial Pilot program. I recently applied and was accepted! My intentions are to complete BBCC's entire Part 141 program and possibly become a CFI there.

With the entire industry having a great demand for pilots, this is a fantastic time for me to continue and achieve my goals! ✈️



Liam was all smiles after completing his second scholarship flight...with instructor and former CWB scholar Gabriel Bacerdo!

## 2016 SCHOLAR UPDATE

By Gabriel Bacerdo

I GRADUATED FROM PURDUE'S Professional Flight Program in May. I was fortunate to be hired as a flight instructor at Galvin in June. I am very grateful to the Cascade Warbirds organization. Of all the flight schools I applied to, Galvin was the only one that offered me an interview, and ultimately a flight instruction position. In my cover letter and interview, I was sure to emphasize that I completed private pilot ground school and my first two intro flights at Galvin through the scholarship awarded to me by the Cascade Warbirds.

It really has come full circle. The two 152s I took my two intro flights in, N48804 and N24766, are still at Galvin. And I now have the opportunity to provide intro flights in those same aircraft to those hoping to get into aviation just as I was in 2016. I was able to fly with Liam last week and was happy to see Cascade Warbirds on my schedule. I wish him well in starting his aviation career at Big Bend.

Right now, I have about 590 hours of flight time and am working toward my Restricted ATP minimums of 1000 hours to get to the airlines. My ultimate goal, although highly selective, is to fly the C-17 in the Air Force Reserve. Thank you again for putting me in contact with Mark Deaton. He was able to introduce me to a couple of pilots at McChord and point me in the right direction. Every once in a while, I update him on my progress. I completed the AFOQT and PCSM tests, and I have my MEPS physical next week.

I am now at the point in the process of “rushing

units” and getting to know members of the squadron, hopefully to be selected for an interview. Last month, I visited the 301st Airlift Squadron at Travis AFB. I am putting my emphasis on the three C-17 squadrons at McChord: the 97th, 313th, and 728th. I was able to attend a few of the Unit Training Assemblies this summer, and I will go back for the one in September as well.

I really enjoy listening to the stories they have to tell, especially concerning Operation Deep Freeze. The active duty and reserve squadrons at McChord are the only C-17 squadrons across the Air Force that support the National Science Foundation mission in Antarctica. Two of the squadrons have interviews in February, and I hope to be selected for one of those.

Thank you again for providing me with the opportunity to get my aviation journey started. As I mentioned a long time ago in my scholarship application, my passion for aviation has existed for as long as I can remember. For a long while, that passion existed as an onlooker. Completing private pilot ground and taking the flight controls during my intro flight allowed me to experience flight for the first time as a pilot rather than as a spectator.

Being back in Washington, I would love to attend the next in-person meeting whenever they resume. I was hoping to send you an update sooner, but my flying schedule over the summer has been very busy. ✈️



Memorial  
Scholarship

The 2022 Cascade Warbirds Memorial Youth Flight Training scholarship program is now open!

Encourage a deserving teenager to apply or make your tax-deductible donation at [cascadewarbirds.org/youth](http://cascadewarbirds.org/youth).



**WHAT A SMALL WORLD IT IS**

I joined the Navy Reserve while in dental school in 1960. We did not get any tuition, books, or pay. We could use the Officers Club at Sand Point Naval Air Station. Drinks were a quarter and it was an impressive place to take a date. My classmate had convinced me this was the prudent thing to do. The Navy has the best looking uniform. It will be a real chick magnet. The most persuasive reason was I would have a job the day I graduated, June of 1964. I would graduate at twenty-three and had no idea where I might want to practice. In addition, the Navy had a lot of members. It would be a good place to build my skills in preparation for having a practice someday.

About a month before graduation, I heard over the clinic intercom, "Mr. Quarnstrom, please answer line twelve." The clinic had 100 dental chairs, dental students, and patients. It was rare to get a call there. I answered the phone and was told it was the detail officer who decided where I would serve on active duty. I was to be with the Fleet Marine Force at Camp Pendleton. I explained I had joined the Navy Reserve. He explained the Navy gave dentists to the Marines.

I went back to my patient a little pale. I was the least Marine-like person I knew. He asked what was wrong. I explained and he said, "That is great, the Corps is good people. They will take good care of you. I am a member of the Marine Reserve." A few months later, I arrived at Camp Pendleton to start my career as a Marine dentist. I did have lots of patients who needed lots of dentistry, so my skills started being honed for when I left active duty in two years.

One of the other new dentists had been married right after graduation. He got orders to a Seabee battalion that was going to Okinawa. His new wife would have to go home and live with her parents. He was devastated. I thought Okinawa sounded good. We were able to switch, so I turned in my Marine boots and went to Seabee land. In turn, I was issued Seabee utility



Marines make an armored amphibious landing.

greens and was back to Camp Pendleton for field military training. I fired machine guns, pistols, and rifles, threw grenades, set off dynamite charges, marched, and spent a week in a fighting hole. I explained to the gunnery sergeant that I was in the dental part of medical and a non-combatant. He explained to me that all Marines were riflemen first. "Shut up and run, sir."

Three months later, we had left Okinawa on an LST and made the first amphibious assault into Vietnam at Chu Lai. Our landing was covered by A-4s. There was very little opposition, but the A-4s did some bombing of suspected Viet Cong. While in Vietnam, I had a hand-wound 8mm movie camera. I shot a lot of film that I could send home to my family to show what I was doing—not much dentistry, as my drill was powered by a foot treadle. I have copies of the movies on my iPhone.

Advance fifty-five years. Alaska Airlines has an Aviation Day when it opens a couple of hangars to kids interested in aviation. Alaska has simulators the kids can fly, all sorts of aviation displays, and planes they can go through. This year, an A-4 was on display with a set of stairs so the kids could see into the cockpit. I found the owner of this A-4 and asked if he would like to see the video of the A-4s for which we Seabees had built an expeditionary airfield. The jets landed using arresting gear and took off with the aid of JATO rockets. He said to me, "Let me see them. I was there. I flew top cover for your landing. There was not much opposition, but we did find a few targets." What are the chances of running into such a person fifty-five years later and striking up this conversation?

One of my other volunteer jobs is docent at the Seattle Museum of Flight. I had a visitor ask me a question about the MiG-21 that I could not answer. I told him I would do some research and get back to him if he would give me his email. We got to talking about the museum's Huey in the Vietnam display. He told me he had flown them in the Chu Lai area in 1965, the same time I was there. I got the info about the MiG-21 and



Seabees building an expeditionary airfield. All photos: Fred Quarnstrom





An A-4 Skyhawk makes a jet-assisted takeoff (JATO).

emailed it to him. I told him I had some video he might be interested in. I emailed him the address of the YouTube video of our time in Vietnam.

I got an answer back. Secretary of Defense McNamara had visited our airfield after it was complete. The runway was over 7,000 feet long, of interlocking aluminum panels 10 feet by 18 inches about a foot thick. This matting formed the runway and taxiways. He responded that of the four Hueys that landed there, he was flying the second behind the one that carried McNamara. Again, what are the odds of running into someone who was there while I was filming with my hand-wind movie camera?

We pilots tend to talk a lot. According to my wife, that may be the understatement of the year. You just never know when you may run into someone you had contact with sometime in the past.

If you go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mtr1JTf62Us> (or scan the QR code with your mobile device), at 20:30 you can see the Hueys and McNamara. Remember, these are primitive home movies that are fifty-five years old. ✪



*(Continued from page 6)*

chose to solve ADS-B with a Garmin GDL-82. The company tech reps stated it will work in-line with an existing military transponder. It will do its magic using the O-2's wiring and antenna. A GPS puck is inevitable and will be the only visible modification for this device. As I removed the components on the radio rack for work on the aft firewall, I removed the aft circuit breaker/relay box. The inside of this box was spray painted with a symbol, I am guessing by some young avionics airman in the seventies. It is a circle with a triangle inscribed, which has a laundry list of definitions, ranging from occult to wholistic inner peace. Don commented that he has found something similar to this in many of the O-2s he has taken apart. He showed me several places where a peace symbol had been etched on sub-panels of the adjacent project.

#### THE PATH FORWARD

The wings have been redone, engines and props have been inspected and mounted, windows have been replaced, the interior has been redone and sound-proofed, etc. The plane is sitting in pieces, ready to go to the paint shop. We know that a lot of work has been done, but it doesn't "look" much different than it did two years ago. Following paint, it should be ready for plumbing and test runs. I intend to paint the plane in Air Force gray, the way it was as a National Guard plane in Indiana. That's how it lived most of its service life. I mentioned "Gone Savage" at the start. Nose art wasn't typical for these planes, but I wanted to name it all the same. No graphics, just lettering "Gone Savage" on the left front. When I was flying Cobras in Afghani-

stan for two years, my ATO call sign was Savage. To all players, that call sign on the radio meant you had a USMC AH-1W attack aircraft that is FAC (A) capable. It seems to fit. I am looking forward to the reassembly. I think the high hurdle is going to be the avionics issue. I am hoping to find a shop that likes to deal with classic/antique electronics. I don't need them all working right away, but I do hope to get as many of them as I can working again.

I am very happy I have had the opportunity to dig my hands into this plane as it is restored. I enjoy the learning process and hope these accounts were interesting for you. I will keep you posted as she comes together and gets ready for flight. ✪



An O-2A being used as an example for Jay's restoration. All photos: Jay Borella

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## CHECK SIX



A Cessna O-2A Super Skymaster fires a smoke rocket to mark a target for an air strike. While Sky-masters were used for the FAC mission by the United States, variants saw counterinsurgency combat. French license-built Cessna 337s were purchased by Rhodesia in 1975 and converted to carry unguided rockets, bombs, napalm, and 7.7mm top-mounted machine guns!  
Photo: US Air Force, <https://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/Upcoming/Photos/igphoto/2000551519/>

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Our full list of events and their status is updated regularly on our calendar at [www.cascadewarbirds.org/events](http://www.cascadewarbirds.org/events). Check it for updates, which are likely.

### October

- 9 Member meeting  
CANCELLED
- 16 Benton Air Faire  
(Redding, CA)

### November

- 13 Member meeting  
CANCELLED

### December

- 11 Annual dinner party &  
awards banquet  
CANCELLED

**Bold** denotes a “max effort” event for Cascade Warbirds

See the website or contact the Operations Officer for details