



Fist of the Fleet Association

a non profit 501 (c) (19) military organization

NEWSLETTER

Apr 2023

Preserving the Past Providing for Today
Promoting the Future

SPRING EDITION

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As the new president of FOFA, I would like to recognize the contributions of our latest past presidents, John "Chalks" Chalker and Gary "Dome" Kerans. Both gentlemen have done a terrific job during their time as the FOFA "Air Boss" and I hope that I can continue the tradition going forward. Dome has been elected as secretary of the association, thus continuing his service to our organization. Well done, Dome!

One thing I think we all can agree on is the procession of time in our lives. I'm not saying our board members are getting old, but those of us who still have hair tend to the "silver fox" side of the coin. We are looking for the next generation of leaders for FOFA. I hope the Hornet drivers and maintainers are listening and will be interested in serving.

As many of you know, our former president, Bob Kison, passed away recently. Bob was one of the "founding fathers" of FOFA and spent many years building the membership and organizing reunions. We all owe a huge debt of gratitude to Bob and Nita. It may be a little late, but fair winds and following seas, shipmate. You will be missed.

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On a lighter note, the Fist '23 reunion is cooking! Lots of folks that we haven't seen in awhile have signed up and looking to party! Reunion info is on the website for your perusal. Take advantage of the room discount and show up please. It's not set in stone yet, but one of our most famous Fisties might just be our banquet speaker. Also, the Blue Angels show and Naval Aviation Museum tour should be awesome.

Lastly, the date for the squadron 80th birthday has not been announced but is still on the agenda. Skipper Tedrow (who was a flight instructor in VFA-122 with my daughter) will pass along that info when available. I know NAS Lemoore is a difficult travel destination for most, but all FOFA members are welcome to attend.

Fists forever,

Nick "Beef" Johnson



Above, Nick and Barb Johnson Circa '75

Mission Statement

Perpetuate the history of Naval Aviation Squadrons VT-17, VA-6B, VA-65, VA-25 and VFA-25,
Remember deceased veterans and comfort their survivors,
Conduct charitable and educational programs,
Foster and participate in activities of patriotic nature,
Assist current active squadron members, and
Provide assistance to family members in times of emergency.

SKIPPERS CORNER

Greetings current and former Fisties!

The squadron has been busy since our last update. We recently returned from NAS Key West, FL after finally finishing our A/S and A/A SFARP training. It's hard to believe that the entire process took nearly 6 months from start to finish : -) It sounds like a lot but given the threat we'll take all the training we can get. From bottom to top our squadron performed remarkably, leading the charge for CVW-11!

We were able to make it back to Lemoore for Easter Sunday and are now entering a lull in the action. We are conducting local Ops until we take the squadron to the carrier for the first extended carrier detachment since the squadron's last deployment in 2020! We definitely have a lot to learn around the boat so we are taking advantage of this down time to conduct as much training as possible before we get underway.

In the meantime, we are narrowing down dates for the 80th reunion in Lemoore. I think we have identified a window between late September and early October that will work. Once we make the call I'll spread the word. Until then, take care and fly safe!"

V/r,

CDR Mark "IROC" Tedrow



IN MEMORIAM

Robert D. Kison

February 19, 1938 - March 30, 2023



Bob was born February 19, 1938, and passed away at home March 30, 2023. He is survived by his wife, Nita, three children and three step-children: Roger (Cathy) Kison, Mark (Angela) Kison, Amy Kison, Mark (Dawn) Bustos, Lisa (Ed) Hensley, and Chad (Malinda) Bustos, and three grandchildren Emily, Benjamin and Lillian.

After college Bob received his Naval Aviator wings on April 26, 1961, and spent two tours in Vietnam with over 200 carrier landings. After he left the Navy in 1964, he was employed by Northwest Airlines until his medical retirement in February 1991, flying the Lockheed Electra, Boeing 727, and Boeing 747, all as Captain after initial training. His medical retirement was the result of heart problems, but ironically he passed because of pancreatic cancer.



Bob and Nita traveled in a motor coach extensively after his retirement, fell in love with the Titusville area, and bought a home at The Great Outdoors. After about 3 years there, they decided they loved the area so much that they purchased a permanent home in the area.

Bob was actively involved in the Valiant Air Command for several years. He also initiated the Fist of the Fleet Association with members from VA-25 and VFA-25. In addition he loved gardening, hydroponics, woodworking, and cooking. Bob and Nita were also active sponsors of the Titusville Playhouse.

Bob will be interred at the Cape Canaveral National Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to St. Francis Reflections Foundation (hospice), Valiant Air Command, or Titusville Playhouse (all of which have websites for address information).

Have you paid your 2023 Dues?

Annual Dues: \$25/YR

Life Time Dues \$200

Mail dues to Financial Officer:

Chuck Webster 2441 Lock B Road North Clarksville TN 37043

Only Voting Members have access to the Directory

Become a Voting Member!

Visit the Base Exchange at

www.fistofthefleet.org

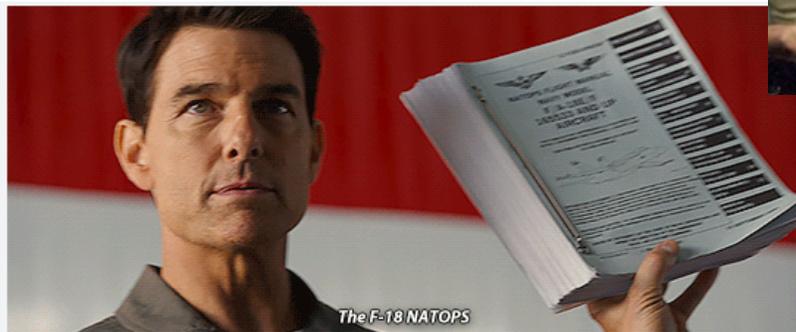
FROM THE COCKPIT By: LT Sean "The Goomah" Garrahan

Case closed? Key West Florida was lucky enough to host CVW-11 for a few weeks in March so that we could sharpen our swords over the Gulf. But while we were trading shots with wily F-5s and aggressively average East Coast Rhinos, a mystery of a missing bike stirred up drama on the streets of Duval. While some shrednecks like LT "Sweet Steven Janowski" Papenthien were kite surfing, LT "Gypsy" Clark blade running on rollerblades, or some O-4s admiring the famous local roosters, a felon within our ranks was committing grand theft auto. After long, in-depth pre-mission briefs, sweat inducing aerial combat, and thorough debriefs highlighting my dumb monkey brain mistakes, our thirst to rest and relax at wholesome, local establishments is nearly insatiable. How do these plaintiffs travel from the Fly Navy Castle to the trenches of Duval? 11 total bicycles were procured for transportation, 5 of which were legally claimed in a group chat; however, each bike lock assigned to the bikes had the same code. So when one bike is lost, which one of us is to blame? An admirable court of law and order was held with attorneys examining all evidence and issuing subpoenas. However, one final defendant was brought to the stand without due process or legal representation and was unjustly prosecuted ending the case. But the plot thickens. A severed bike lock chain was found in a pilot's bag and the missing bike was found. \$1800 was saved by finding the missing bicycle, but the price law and order payed may have been higher.



As the dust settles from our Air to Air training in Key West, tax day looms where we will "have to" pay our taxes, which should help fund some of our future adventures. We are looking long for lineup as missile shoots, a Unit NATOPs Eval, and a trip to the ship loom over the horizon. HARM, Laser Mavericks, and JSOWs will soon be raining down as the JOPA get vital experience in expending the hard work of the military industrial complex, sharpening our tactical skills needed to power project and win decisive fleet engagements. While breaking out in sweat during our tactical training, we will be breaking a mental sweat as we cram NATOPs knowledge of our beloved weapon system so that we can not only survive, but thrive during our Unit NATOPs evaluation. As exciting as all that may be, our biggest news may be the mustaches/flavor savors being cultivated for our boat trip. Even our Brit is participating with a beard. We may all be summoned to court once again for our crimes against humanity for this attempt of cultivating facial hair. All of this is overshadowed by our Gypsy passing her level 3 check ride and becoming a lethal section lead!

Overall, our Air to Air training in conjunction with an unfair, fake news trial, a fantastic wetting down by our new O-4's, Gypsy's inevitable passing of her check ride, the addition of a new blood red American FNG LT Largent, and more life memorable events I am legally prohibited from sharing has been a fantastic time. While peacetime may be sizzling away, VFA-25's collective experiences together are molding us into a team enabling America to decisively win at Land, Sea, Air or in Court. Wouldn't change a thing.



"I was born into a military family on Prince Andrew's Air Force Base in Maryland. My father was a Mess Specialist in the Navy at the time. We moved around a lot, like any other military brat, and eventually ended up in Orlando, Florida, when he retired. I was in the sixth grade then. When I graduated from University High School in 2002, I got a job at Gamestop. I worked there for two years before I decided to go into the Navy.

My main reason for joining the Navy was to try something different. My father always talked about the Navy being the highlight of his life. I headed off to boot camp in November of 2004 to RTC Great Lakes. My first duty station was NAS New Orleans as Master At Arms Seaman Recruit Carvajal. Within the first six months of being there, we went into FPCON Delta and closed the base for four months because of Hurricane Katrina. I've been stationed in Japan during the worst snowstorm in 30 years and got stuck on a hill until security came and got me to go to work. I stood up at the Southwest Regional Operation Center during the Wildfire Season in 2013 for the wildfire season evacuation of Point Mugu. HSC 8, Eightballers was my first aviation command, and we got to be a part of the Transformers movie. My last command as a Master at Arms was at NSA Saratoga Springs, where we stood the watch during COVID-19. I advanced to MA1 and converted to NC1 that same year.



VFA-25 is my first command as a Career Counselor, but I've been a counselor since 2014. I'm currently sitting over 18 years of active duty time, married and have three kids, and I still have a ways to go. The Navy has been a highlight, and I wouldn't change anything about it."

SENIOR SAILOR OF THE YEAR:

Hello, Fist of the Fleet Association! My name is AD1 Jermario Williams, originally from Fort Pierce, Florida. I joined the world's greatest Navy in April 2010 to provide for my family, and travel the world. My first tour was HSC-4 located in North Island, California working on Helicopters. In 2014 I was selected to VFA-122 where I was introduced to the World's greatest Fighter Jet, the F-18 Superhornet. My journey here in VFA-25 began on my birthday, November 6, 2017. Currently, I'm serving in Maintenance Control, working my Safe for Flight qualification. VFA-25 is without a doubt, hands down the best Command I've had a chance to be part of, and it's been a pleasure. When I think about VFA-25 two words come to mind Family, and Professionalism. I want to thank all my mentors and mentees for all the guidance and support that helped mold me into the leader I've become. I'm thankful for the opportunity to serve with my fellow Fists and as always, I'm damn proud to be a Fist!



PLANE CAPTAIN OF THE YEAR:

Hello, Fist of the Fleet Association!

My name is AD3 Chad Murray, and I am from Brawley, Ca. I joined May of 2020 out of San Diego where I was a welder working on Naval Vessels. I joined the Navy to further my education and to start a new trade. VFA-25 is my first squadron. I went to the line shack where I got my Plane Captain Qualification and 310 CDI. I am proudly the current Plane Captain of the Year! I am happily married to Nubia and have 3 children. I am currently serving in the "Mech Shop" (power plants) and will be a Fist until 2024.



Greetings Fist of the Fleet.

I am AO3 David J. Alcantar. Born and raised in Santa Cruz, California, I've loved the ocean for as long as I can remember. I grew up surfing, swimming, and running at our beaches. My love for the ocean and two uncles who both served in Vietnam as special operators formed to create my desire to join in maritime operations myself. I was always active in my younger years having played football, basketball, ran track, swam, and did Jiu-Jitsu. I played football for a year in college, but always felt like I needed to do more. So, at the conclusion of my freshman year of college, I walked into my local recruiters office with my intentions set. Six months later, I was shipping off to boot camp



I checked onboard of VFA-25 in August of 2020, after having begun my Naval career the previous year, on December 9th. Being from only two and a half hours north, I knew a little of Lemoore before arriving here. While I wasn't ecstatic in regards to the base I would be stationed at, I was grateful to only be a few hours from home. Over the past two and a half years I have been able to both help my parents at home and watch my younger siblings grow up and get ready to graduate high school. Joining right before the COVID pandemic began, and checking into VFA-25 during the middle of said pandemic, my Naval career had an interesting beginning. From being quarantined in Pensacola for a total of 28 days, to checking onboard of VFA-25 during 3-day working weeks, I did not know what to expect out of the Navy during my first year apart from the current schedule. As time moved on and things returned to semi-normal, I was able to adapt to and learn the ways of an aviation squadron.

I am thankful of my time as a member of VFA-25, and grateful for the support and friendship of everyone that is apart of this squadron as well. As many know, my goal has always been to work in NSW, having originally joined with a contract to do so. This squadron has given me the tools, the support, and the guidance in helping me achieve my goal, and recently I was granted to opportunity to attend SB training. I am excited and ready for this next step of my journey, and thankful for all the friends and mentors made along the way. I've learned a lot about myself along the way. Dedication, mission above self, and hard work are all characteristics of this squadron that I have witnessed on a day to day basis and tried to adopt more of into myself. So, thank you to all of you, thank you to VFA-25, and as always, FIST EM!!!

Courtesy John Chalker: I presented a copy of the Legacy Plaque to Rosario Rousa IV, son of Rosario "Zip" Rousa III, whom we honored with a Legacy Plaque in the Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola. The son, Rosario, was a Hornet driver and former CO of VFA-97; he currently flies for Delta Airlines and lives in Oceanside. He may join us for the P'cola reunion as he plans to be in P'cola in early November. The pic on the right is a father-son photo.



Warhawks

