

Hey Ancient Griffins

See below from one of my UPT classmates. This ought to be fun, please take a few minutes to reminisce on the questions in red. Send your thoughts to me and to Le Anne at xxxxxxx, I'll send you mine shortly. (This won't take any longer than all the time we waste reading and forwarding all those gonzo emails!) It would be greatly appreciated.

Gracias
jad

.....

Classmates, I need your help!

My wife has been taking some writing classes and is now trying to do research for a project about pilots and their airplanes. I enjoyed the questions and thought perhaps some of you might be willing to answer them for her as well?

Imagine that you died and got to the gates of heaven there next the gates you see EVERY airplane you ever flew and St. Peter says you've got an hour in one of them. Which do you choose and why? Nothing too long or technical just a couple of sentences.

The feelings of your last flight on a particular airplane or at retirement.

The experience of an aircraft's last flight or parking an aircraft in the boneyard.

Your response can be sent to me or to Le Anne :xxxxxxx
Thanks for your time and attention,

Bob Ottmann

Oh, by the way.....if those airplanes are at the gates of Heaven, I am taking my hour in the F-106!

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No, no please keep sending.....I love it!

-----Original Message-----

From: Jad Dennis < >

To: < >

Cc: < >

Sent: Tue, Nov 22, 2011 2:43 pm

Subject: FW: St Peter's Test

Le Anne,

Sorry to keep pestering you with more material !! Maybe it's the "last call" effect, they think they'll get left out.

Jad

FROM "SPARKY" BATISTA

Jad,

Thanks for the invite, what a great forum to reminisce and catch up with other jocks deep held feelings. I think we all tear up but never admit it weather it was our fini flight or a trip to the bone yard.

The one aircraft that I would choose would have to be the viper, without hesitation, hands down the greatest stroke to the (then only) male ego for two decades. Though I only got a glimpse of the 106 from a single 4 ship ride, I had a couple of thousand hours and could tell she was a sweet heart. I flew with Mike McCoy in the B. I remember my first flight in the F-4C at Kingsley field, during the first turn out of the traffic pattern on take-off the instructor asked what I thought about the "rhino" I remember saying it looked like a fighter, it smelled like a fighter but it flew like a truck.

I remember the final flight the most for emotion, like your testimony, after beating up the pattern, I recall taxiing back very slowly and considering stopping at Fresno Jet Center to top off the tanks and have another go.

I didn't' want to hang around the squadron after the final flight, so my fini flight was my last day on purpose. I knew, Like BOB says, that something would be missing. I'm no longer one of "them" Things would look the same, and the guys would be cordial, but I would be one of the "un-dead." like one of those occasional non-rated officers hanging around the flight planning table. I've never put on my flight suit since, their still hanging in the closet with my G suit and helmet. Lived in that thing for 15 years, couldn't wear it the next day. I think out of respect for what it represents.

Probably the greatest revelation (my apologies to St. Peter) was getting to go back to a Squadron Christmas party after several years of being denied the privilege. So used to the civilian world, I think I got to see my old buds from a fresh perspective, like Jimmy Stewart got to see his friends and family in the movie "It's a Wonderful Life."

From behind an uprighted table with three other pilots, one other retired one active as we threw our arms out hurling food at others in one of the famous food and marshmallow fights. I recall at that instant seeing in that room so much raw talent, creative genius and smarts. Most parties are fortunate to have one person in the room that demands your respect and awe, here there were dozens. Guys like Bo, Throwing in is plaid vest, JT

picking up and playing the electric piano to a song he had never heard before any playing it flawlessly, Yon...say no more, Buddy, Doc Adams! Generals, Lawyers, Stock brokers, airline pilots, test pilots, authors, guys who play with snow boards and quantum physics. All fighter pilots!

Sorry I went on, but, thanks for the opportunity and the privilege of knowing, flying and fighting with you all. The planes were "bitchin" but you guys were what made it the best job in the world!

Sean "Sparky" Bautista

Jad,

Most excellent! All of them were fun to read. Reading other folk's responses brought back even more wonderful recollections of great flights

Thanks to all who put together a great project.

Jim McNab aka B.O.B.

Subject: Homework results
Date: Mon, 21 Nov 2011 22:10:47 -0800

Here are the answers to the St. Peter test. Hope I didn't miss anyone, let me know if I did. Didn't have time to send in your answer sheet? It's not too late!

Thanks

Jad

Thanks Jad,

Your buddies have done an amazing job. Each email is like opening a gift. I went from wanting to get a few varied responses to wanting to ask EVERY pilot in the world. You never know, friend of mine ---a Delta pilot, picked a J5 he used to tow banners with. I really appreciate your support with this.

Le Anne

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(Answers from Bob Hervatine)

Imagine that you died and got to the gates of heaven there next the gates you see EVERY airplane you ever flew and St. Peter says you've got an hour in one of them. Which do you choose and why? Nothing too long or technical just a couple of sentences.

(tie, really, but to play the game, edge to F-106)

F-106: One more time to go to 40K', light burner, accelerate to 1.7(+) mach, then pull up, stay supersonic, and watch sky start to turn purple at 60K(+)'! Only got to do this a couple times (go 'really' high) while at Tyndall AFB, FL, launching Genies at simulated Mig-25's (in fact Bomarc missiles launched out of Eglin AFB). Rules said 'no fly above 50K', but it was impossible to take a good shot and stay below 50,000'. Most guys I know pressed WAY beyond that 'just to see what it would be like'. Seeing the sky change colors was one of the coolest, most unforgettable experiences I ever had, flying or anywhere else.

OV-10: One more time to fly with huge exhilaration but no real fear, chasing/being chased by wingman at 10'(?) to 50' off the deck, leaving a wake in the rice fields of SEA and Korea.

The feelings of your last flight on a particular airplane or at retirement.

(F-16/retirement): 'This is more fun than my FIRST flight in a jet!' I didn't think I'd top that. I wondered BEFORE my last flight if I'd fret about screwing up/planting the jet jet in the ground my last flight. Just the opposite. Never thought about anything except 'how cool this STILL is after all these years'.

The experience of an aircraft's last flight or parking an aircraft in the boneyard.

(F-102 delivered to Davis-Monthan boneyard from Keflavik, Iceland): No real sentimental thoughts until I listened to the engine winding down at final shutdown after the last leg of the trip. Almost got misty eyed. Kinda same as when Old Yeller got shot, except worse in a way, because there was absolutely nothing wrong with the jet, and it had become a friend as we crossed the North Atlantic, Greenland icecap, northern Canada, etc.

Bob Hervatine ('Grinder')

(Answers from Jad Dennis)

Imagine that you died and got to the gates of heaven there next the gates you see EVERY airplane you ever flew and St. Peter says you've got an hour in one of them. Which do you choose and why? Nothing too long or technical just a couple of sentences.

Note to St. Peter

Sorry Pete, I previously died and went to heaven. Can you believe it, I got to fly four different fighters in my career, if that's not heaven, especially for an undeserving wretch like me, I don't know what is. The F-102 was my first operational fighter, isn't a fellow's first fighter, like his first love, always supposed to be the best? Then there was the F-106, a high-flyin' dream boat, way ahead of its time, cruise all day well above 40,000, I'd go back there in a minute. The F-4 Phantom, a two-seater, yuk!, the dregs of the single-seat fighter world. Actually I didn't mind the F-4 even with a WSO in the back seat. It was a monster, all power, guts, smoke and noise, a killin' machine, and all I had to do was "fly", the guy in back did all that bothersome radar work. Now we come to the F-16, The Fighting Falcon, The Viper – Oh-My-God (sorry Pete, I hope he's not listening) I can't even begin to describe this piece of high-tech, high-stylin' machinery. It's smooth, infinitely maneuverable, and if you can believe it, comfortable, like the fabled magic carpet ride, but of course if you get carried away with yourself the 9 G's will crush you like a bug. Incredible. Now then, I wouldn't mind a turn in the old T-38 and even the T-37 again, just for old times' sake. A fighter pilot is trained to be assertive and decisive... but I can't make up my mind! Can I have 10 minutes in each one? Never mind, at this point I've probably forgotten more than I ever knew about any of them. Thanks anyway Peter Sir, I'll just soar around in my memories.

The feelings of your last flight on a particular airplane or at retirement.

Last Flight

Last military flight was in the F-16 just a week before retirement. Led a four-ship out over the desert ranges east of the Sierra Nevadas, 2v2 air-to-air on a beautiful clear September day, doesn't get any better. On RTB brought the 4 Vipers down initial to the break, pitched-out, tight base turn, low approach to a closed pattern, the other 3 guys full stop, leaving you alone in the pattern with all your thoughts, emotions, a full career behind you, all your friends and family down there on the ramp, and plenty of gas. How much is enough? Like a little kid (what? we are little kids) being called in for dinner, you just want one more (closed pattern) and then one more after that, but you also know that each additional trip around is another chance to screw up, so after about 3 low approaches you decide to put it on the ground for the last time and hope your final landing is a greaser. Taxi onto the ramp and beneath the high water arch from the base fire trucks and prepare for the traditional hosing down on descending from the ladder. Cleaning out your locker a day or two later may be when it all finally sinks in!

jad

(Answers from Pat Belanger)

Hi Le Anne and all you ancient Griffins,

I would want to fly the Viper for another hour! Maybe more. When they built that jet they took almost all of the shortcomings of all the other planes I had flown, and fixed them or created something much better. The F-16 is an engineering marvel and truly a pilot's airplane.

My last flight in the Viper was one of the very best. I was able to give my son Brian a ride in the bus and show him why I was so passionate about my work. We went super, he pulled 9 g's, we did formation with Lightning, did every acro move I could think of or he could take, did an accel demo (which still makes me want to wet myself when I remember how good that feels), went really low and fast, and more!

I had the honor and the rotten job of taking 2 F-102's and a 106 to DM. It was bitter-sweet. All 3 airplanes were code 1 before and after the flights. They may have all become targets eventually, especially the '6. Similar to Moose's feelings, I felt like I just shot my favorite dog.

Thanks for letting me get all that off my chest!!!

Sincerely,
Patrick Belanger

(Answers from Jim McNab)

Here are my responses.

I hope you share other's responses with the rest of us. These are great questions!

Jim McNab

Imagine that you died and got to the gates of heaven there next the gates you see EVERY airplane you ever flew and St. Peter says you've got an hour in one of them. Which do you choose and why? Nothing too long or technical just a couple of sentences.

First, I would choose the F-106. My first fighter... my first mistress... my lifelong love. My fondest flying memories will forever be of the "Six".
Next, I would fly the F-16. My passion for the Viper is more aeronautical than romantic. It was a great airplane to finish my career in.
Finally, if I couldn't go back and have another 'fling' in the F-106, I would take choose an hour in the T-33. Low tech; old tech; underpowered; primitive. But, what a fun airplane to dance among the clouds with!

The feelings of your last flight on a particular airplane or at retirement.

The feeling I had on my last flight at retirement was neither sadness or elation. However, I felt like someone whom had a part of them taken away... an amputation of sorts. I was no longer going to partake in something that I had done on a regular basis for twenty years and that I passionately loved. When I walked away from that airplane on the 30th of December 1993, I was no longer whole

The experience of an aircraft's last flight or parking an aircraft in the boneyard.

The last flight I had in the F-16 was also my last flight as a fighter pilot. It was a great flight. As I taxied in, I reflected back. How cool was it to fly fighters out of my hometown for twenty years? How exquisitely grand was it to be part of one the most exclusive fraternities in existence? What a blessing it was to have developed the bond, the camaraderie, the esprit de corps, and the love with some of the finest people on the planet? The sad part was that things were no longer the same. I had now seen it from both sides. Although I had worn the patch and was an alumnus, I was no longer truly one of them. Ex-fighter pilots are in a kind of "no man's land". The folks still yanking and banking treat you with respect and reverence. Yet, you are no longer one of them. It is a walk we all dread. But, in the end, it is one we all make.

Jim McNab

(Answers from Ken Muller)

Jad,
Thanks for the email and a chance to reminisce...

At the pearly gates, I would pick the...

Viper... F-16A.

Flew a MiG-29 once. Good times, but only 17 minutes of fuel until bingo overhead the airfield. Too quick, pilotus interruptus. Besides, it was a Russian tin can.

Ah, the Viper... Flies like a sports car - fast, nimble - and fits like a glove. Bubble canopy puts you sitting on top of the world. Manual override switch works well when she misbehaves. Glides well too, right Jad?

Got to experience an F-16 on my fini flight... looking over my shoulder from my F-15 trying to jink while Cal McKoane gunned me in his F-16... Thanks for reminding me of my place in the world, Cal. I "killed" many F-15s while flying F-16s, but very few the

other way around. Last flight (F-15) was a blur of emotion. How do you put 20+ years into those last moments?

Dropping jets at the Boneyard down at DM was a bit surreal, like taking a lost dog to the pound. They tell you they may fly again, but the vastness of the boneyard relics tells a different story. Stranger yet is driving by the Boneyard years later to see a jet that you dropped off (F-16 from Kingsley) or others that you had flown (F-4s from Fresno). I work hard these days avoiding the Boneyard for old pilots.

thoughts on jets. When F-15s fly overhead here in Klamath Falls, people will ask me if I miss the flying.

Every day, thanks for asking.

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}  
};[: ) Ken "Moose" Muller  
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(Answers from Bo Boehringer)

1. F-86. The first fighter I flew, so I'm nostalgic about it. It was also the only fighter I flew that had guns on it.
2. I don't remember the last flight I flew in any of the aircraft I flew except the last flight on retirement. That was an end of an era for me in military flying and leaving behind the comradery only possible in a military environment between pilots.
3. I flew several different aircraft into the boneyard and all I can remember is that they were all code 1. It is as if they knew it was over and didn't want to be retired. Just like us.

Bo Boehringer

(Answers from JT Taggett)

Yo Jad—and Bob & Le Anne,

T-37, T-38, AT-38, F-4 (C's, D's, E's, RF's), T-33, F-16, Cessna 152, Piper Seneca, DC9, DC10, B757, B767,

Without question, I'd take my hour in the F16. Fun to fly, great performance, single seat, incredible visibility... Thinkin about it makes me drool...

"....that's what dreams....are made of....." !!

JT Taggett

Last F16 flight: Aug, 2003 after 12 yrs of flying it. (wow....)

(Answers from Joe Leadingham)

JAD!, good to hear from you!

I hope all is well with you and the FAM. The homework assignment has been a good exercise in remembering the good things, and lucky things, one might have done with an airplane in their flying career. I guess the first thing I would do if faced with the decision to pick a single airplane would be to plead and try to negotiate with St Peter for 10 minutes in six different airplanes. Knowing that such a offer from St Peter would have meant that I must have done something worthy, I feel sure a request of this nature would be granted.

With that in mind the first 10 minutes would be a take off in a clean F-101 on a cold morning, temp below freezing, near a costal airport, temp/dew point within one degree and a simultaneous burner light. I have never had a more exciting takeoff. The takeoff roll was about 700 feet and the gear handle had to come up with the nose in order to prevent a trapped nose gear. Then the subsequent climb was unparalleled to ten thousand feet, about 60 degrees of pitch.

The second ten minutes would be in the B-747. I would pick landing in anchorage with a 30 knt crosswind on a snow covered runway. This may seem strange however the 747 was the best x-wind airplane I ever flew. because of its mass, huge rudder and excellent differential thrust capability you can essentially thumb your nose at those kinds of winds making landings in crappy conditions very tolerable.

The 3rd 10 minutes would be a low level flight in the F-4 over a frozen trundra with lakes, rivers and mountains, maybe somewhere in Canada. The F-4 was fun at low level going fast. The faster the better. you could get really low with it and it felt good, reliable, responsive and at home there. Ridge crossings and terrain following were its best regime.

Number four would be doing landings in a light airplane either the RV-4 or the Maule. Landing off field is a kick. Stinkys wedding was one of those experiences of a lifetime. Flying at low speed in a taildragger and landing on an unprepared field, golf course in this case, was a definite do again event. Airplanes designed for this kind of flying requires you to pay close attention to what your airplane is doing so your SA has to be high.

Number 5 would be the F-16. Once out of takeoff and landing gains this airplane was unbeatable in the right hands, when flown smartly. I cannot claim to have flown it smartly as often as I would have liked however I did have some moments which I would like to do again, notably a two v four Ludwig and I had with a flight of F-15's in which we performed a " RUMS ",(old school term for Radar Unattached Mutual Support) attack, out flanked/notched all four, retied visually at the merge and hosed all four, two with Missiles and two with guns. That was most satisfying.

Number six would be the F-106. What a sweetheart. This airplane talked to you and you felt what it was doing all the time. I would like to fly it again fast and feel the transition into supersonic flight, the changes in noise level and smooth control transition as fuel transfers to the F-tank and T tank (how come I can remember the fuel feed sequence 1,

2, T, F, T, 3). The flight I sh took Yonder, Broker and me on to Hill to do battle with F-105's was one I will never forget, takeoff burner climb to 45k super all the way to Hill then over the next couple of days kick butt on Weasels. So I guess I would like to go Mach 2+ then do a wing landing and enjoy aerobraking like no other airplane. This is probably too long but it is really fun to reminisce. I think the real part of loving an airplane dwells in the arena of doing something dumb and the airplane forgiving you. This is like the Luck/Experience bucket analogy Frank Walters used to espouse, which I do agree with. JAD take care my best to Jan and the girls. Cheers!, Joe

Thanks Dogs, Le Anne is lovin' this stuff.
j

From: Two Dogs
Sent: Tuesday, November 22, 2011 10:10 PM
To: xxxxx
Cc: xxxxx
Subject: Re: Homework for Old Farts

For my one hour, I would strap on the F-16 Falcon, one last time! You literally became one with that jet, straps so tight they left marks on various parts of your body. You thought, it moved, instantaneously! Doing an FCF (Functional Flight Check) you could feel the jet pulse with every acceleration and deceleration. In the middle of a huge fur ball you knew you were the Shit! Bring It!

For my Fini flight, it was a foggy, dreary Fresno winter day. I couldn't get enough of every second of that day. It was the finality, I knew that once I stepped out of that jet I would never do it again. I would never again reach that pinnacle, feel the adrenalin rush or the camaraderie of some of the most caring, talented and brilliant servicemen/women in the world! I would give my life for them and I knew they would for me. Over and out!

I led a 2-ship of F-4's to the Boneyard. It was bittersweet. I knew I was going to the F-16 Fighting Falcon, a Real Fighter! On the other hand as we were walking in the terminal headed to our commercial ride home, I looked at my fellow aviators, carrying their helmet bags and dragging their harnesses, I could only feel that we had started on a long journey and our horses had died along the way. We were returning to the ranch with only our gear, our work horse had taken it's last step! Sorry, did I say I was going to be flying the F-16 Fighting Falcon!!!

Thank you for this opportunity, to express some inner musings.

Danny D. "Two Dogs" Cerna

Jadly,

Thanks again for a great project.

Right now I am in good ole' Valdosta with the inlaws and the outlaws for a traditional southern Thanksgiving.

Where are you having turkey?

By the way, I have a trip that terminates in Phoenix on Monday, Nov 28th. I was thinking about coming to Fresno Monday evening the 28th and spending the 29th in Fresno. Is it too late to put together a "quicke" luncheon with you, Howdy, Buddly, Grinder, Beltz, maybe Ish-kabooble and some others? Howdy asked me recently if I could sneak into FAT to meet for one of your 'grey-beard luncheons'. I now have the opportunity. Can you call Howdy and the others and see if it is doable? Just let me know.

Also... do you know the date of the 194th Christmas Party?

Thanks again... I hope you, Jan, the girls and the rest of you have a Happy Thanksgiving!!!

B.O.B.

From: jad
To: B.O.B.
Subject: FW: Homework
Date: Tue, 22 Nov 2011 12:30:59 -0800

B O B

Ha! Finally here's one from the actual LINK. He did a great job.

Where ya gonna eat the Turk?

j

From: Douglas Moore
Sent: Tuesday, November 22, 2011 10:20 AM
To: Jad Dennis
Subject: Re: Homework

Jadly,

These are way cool. Just finished mine and will send it along to you even though the deadline has apparently passed. Would have had it done earlier, but was on my annual long range fishing adventure for several weeks. Returned last monday, and have been up to my ass in canning jars, pressure cookers, and vacuum sealers since then. Hope all is well with, Jan, and the girls, and that you all have a wonderful holidays.

Well, having read several of the Grizzled Griffins' responses, I feel compelled to do likewise. But, before I tell you which bird I would spend my hour in, I'll explain why I wouldn't spend it in some of the others.

Would definitely not choose my first post UPT assignment, that being the F4-D. It did nothing well. That jet would bleed 300 kts in a 180 degree, 4 G turn in full AB. And in the air to ground mode, it was the pits! Coming down the slide, the nose would wander like a drunken sailor, and you never knew, for sure, in what county or province your bomb would land. Besides, flying a "jet" that involved committee decisions on every aspect of flight wasn't really any true fighter pilot's cup of tea.

Wouldn't be the F-106 either. If that was my choice, St. Pete would probably make me wear one of those "fago" orange flight suits, sign for a set of cookies for the Gene, which I would certainly lose with my car keys and thus end up in the brig. Besides, my old neck is too stiff to bury my head in the scope (a requisite for being a true cone head) and my expanded girth would prevent being able to see the TSD, thus prohibiting a safe return to home plate.

Yeah, sure! The F-16 Viper was a phenomenal engineering feat that was a true joy to fly and could make the most mediocre pilot act and feel like Tom Cruz. I am

living proof of that. But, let's face it, guys. The synapses required to make all 86 of those four position finger switches talk to "Hal", and, therefore the jet, are long gone. Crap, I can't even remember how you started the thing! And you know, for sure, that anyone choosing the viper would not be able to resist seeing if the could still handle 9 Gs. Spending eternity in heaven with broken L1 through L5 vertebrae does not sound that appealing to me.

So, my choice would be to spend an hour doing 560 knots at 100 feet AGL in the F-105 Thunder Chief. The most honest and caring fighter ever built was the "Thud". If you don't believe me, just ask Moto ", providing you don't have anything to do for the rest of the day. A direct hit on your intended target was the result of an amazingly stable and truthful platform, coupled with a pilot that somehow, on that pass, got the drift, dive angle, airspeed, and release altitude to all come together. (oh, yeh, a modicum of luck was always present then, also). No "point, pickle, pull" computer controlled wussy was the "thud". Just the most honest, solid, and trustworthy ride any jet jock could ask for.

Took a couple of flying bricks (rhinos) to the bone yard. Only sentiment I remember was realizing that it had been 18 years between my first flight and last flights in the "double ugly", and that I was, most certainly, about to check out in the last jet of my career. Turned out to be quite true. Most memorable aspect of those trips to the boneyard involved then, 2Lt. "Cal" Mckoane. He, Ricky Dale, Glaze Frazer and I took two Phantoms to DM back in 1989. Had to RON at Tinker AFB on the way. Not exactly on a direct route, but apparently we were behind on executing our flying time. It just happened to be Friday night, and just happened to run into some old friends of mine. As six, yes six, of us ate a late breakfast the next morning, Cal could not look his two sunny side up eggs in the face, and would simply look around the table, shake his head in utter amazement as if to dismiss the scene, and I'm sure mutter a prayer that the past 24 hours had just been a bad dream.

I was truly blessed to fly some neat and sexy aircraft. But the greatest blessing was knowing and flying with the world's most honorable and patriotic bunch of little boys, cleverly masquerading in men's bodies, ready and willing to give their lives for their country.

Miss you all,

The Link, (aka Oscar)

From Tom Westbrook:

Imagine that you died and got to the gates of heaven there next the gates you see EVERY airplane you ever flew and St. Peter says you've got an hour in one of them. Which do you choose and why? Nothing too long or technical just a couple of sentences.

Only one hour? And I have to choose just one? Are you sure this is Heaven? Well, if it can only be one, it has to be the 106. The Tweet and T-38 have their magical memories, and later fighters certainly had greater capability (the viper was absolutely amazing), but Heaven isn't about fighting wars, it's about re-experiencing the most powerful moments of a life graced with many powerful moments. Being allowed to fly the 106 was like reaching the summit of Everest - the culmination of a lifetime of childish day-dreams, school notebooks full of airplane drawings and doodles, vicarious longings watching through the fence as god-like heroes roared into the sky, the unachievable hope turned to unexpected elation at being selected, walking the knife-edge of training knowing that the smallest mistake could cost everything, overcoming all obstacles through sheer force of will to gain a summit from which only a lucky few have ever gazed. The pursuit of and realization of this dream was the source of every lasting friendship, the privilege of knowing the most honorable men of the age. It has given me my livelihood and all that I own and enjoy. All of this is embodied in the memories too numerous to list of that wonderful machine.

The feelings of your last flight on a particular airplane or at retirement.

Last flights are always a mix. No fighter pilot wants to be an ex-fighter pilot and we all know that once that final flight is complete, we will never again be truly one of the boys. I was privileged to finish my career on the wing of my good friend Bob Hervatine who was also on his last flight. Most fini-flights end in a beating up of the pattern, which we did with generous use of the forbidden afterburner - but that was only the prelude. The actual end was a formation approach and landing - we ended as we had trained and flown for 2 decades, as a team.....as friends.

The experience of an aircraft's last flight or parking an aircraft in the boneyard.

The F-4 and I had a complex relationship, but a trip to the boneyard is just as it sounds, like a trip to a cemetery. As sad as it always is to take a friend there, you can't help but realize that it is where all of us are headed in the long run. All we can do about it is keep on walking and maybe whistle as we walk.....

peewee