

the most famous teams in the whole world, the Blue Angels. Though he's not with them temporarily at the moment, he will be again soon. A few years ago some people asked several of us what's it like to fly a high speed airplane versus a low speed airplane and one of our deceased aerobatic pals made an unfortunate remark on National TV that it's a lot easier in a high-speed than in a low-speed airplane. I don't think one could truly say that, or that you could make such a comparison. Each one is taxing, in its own way, on both pilot and airplane, and when you're flying at high speed, in close togetherness aerobically, there is not anything that demands more in the way of skill, and reflexes and mental agility. The timing alone, if you will think about it, in Skip Umstead's Slot Number 5, of trying to be on stage at exactly the right time is an extremely difficult task. I want to now bring Skip Umstead up here.

Umstead: Thank you, Bob. While I was sitting there, listening to all this going on, I almost forgot what I have to say. When I used to go to air shows I used to watch Bob Hoover, Art Scholl, and others like that and if you call Frank Sanders a newcomer, what does that make me! I just started in this business in 1970. I was not only a newcomer but I'm a has-been already. But that's the way military teams work. I am a military pilot, in the Navy, and just so that I don't get too parochial about this, I won't talk about the Blue Angels over the Thunderbirds. I want to explain how we work the air show circuit.

The military teams do not compete. They have a very unique mission but there is no competition in it as such. The teams are aligned very closely with recruiting—now that we do not have a draft and are supposed to have an all volunteer military. We have to get out there and let the taxpayers know what the military has to offer, so we tailor our show along that line. Both Air Force and Navy teams try to get out in areas where one does not see much of the military. Here in Southern California one can see a lot of it but we have done shows throughout the country where very little military flying is seen. We like first to show hardware, and right now the F-4 is the best of what we have got. We can't show them the F-14 but we can show the F-4 as the frontline, current, most, best, operational fighter we have. So we bring them the F-4 as a 40,000 pound airplane, 12,000 pounds of

which are fuel, at take off. I won't try to bore you with the speed and other statistics. More importantly, we try to show them the personnel. Of course—five or six F-4's brought into a smaller city airport are important, but we also bring along about a hundred very highly skilled technicians to show. These are the ones that maintain the airplanes, and we show them at work. Then we show our very best in precision aerobatics.

Behind all that, the intent is to show the taxpayers where his dollar went, that these are the custodians of the country's weapons and that we are responsible human beings. Along with that we interest young men and women in careers available in the service for those qualified.

The teams, both the Thunderbirds and the Blue Angels spend a lot of time in training. Right now, over on the desert, the Thunderbirds at Nellis and the Blue Angels down in El Centro, spend about 60 to 80 days training. That consists of flying two missions per day per pilot. Each man spends the time perfecting his job, and that alone. There is no backup pilot. Both teams go through the same cycle. Men come to the team from the Fleet squadrons, or the operational Air Force squadrons, and each one must go through the training course, but he must also be selected, prior to the training, by the other pilots of the team.

Once on the team, the pilot stays about two years, and rotates off. That keeps new blood coming to the team, and also keeps one from getting complacent. It also gives a lot more pilots a shot at it. One of the most rewarding parts of this job is the chance to meet people and to associate with the professionals such as the fellow panelists here this evening. Thank you.

Hoover: Thank you, Skip. I want to take this opportunity to thank Harry Gann for bringing all of us here together tonight. And I also want to say that Skip represents our military men who have been in Vietnam. Every one of the Team members has been in the War. Unfortunately I learned just the other day that Harley Hall, who was a past leader of the Blue Angels, was shot down, missing in action, in the War just fifteen hours before the beginning of the cease fire the other day. Skip confirmed for me just this evening, that, very happily, there were two chutes observed after they left their F-4, which is a pleasant note.

VB-2 AT BATTLE OF CORAL SEA

Barrett Tillman, Athena, Oregon

The Battle of the Coral Sea was the first carrier-to-carrier "duel" in the history of aerial warfare. The U.S. carriers LEXINGTON (CV-2) and YORKTOWN (CV-5) were under the command of RADM Frank J. Fletcher, and were opposed by the Japanese SHOKAKU, ZUIKAKU, and SHOHO (11,000 tons).

The battle was joined on the 7th of May, 1942, during which the SHOHO was sunk by a combined attack of 93 airplanes from both LEXINGTON and YORKTOWN., in which VB-2 claimed five hits. The next day, SHOKAKU was damaged by Dauntlesses of the YORKTOWN, and LEXINGTON was sunk. Although VB-2 suffered no combat losses at Coral Sea, one airplane was badly damaged and was pushed overboard, 2-B-13, piloted by Ens. McDonald, wounded in action but rescued with his crewman.

Following were the airplane dispositions:

Landed aboard YORKTOWN		Sank with LEXINGTON	
2-B-1 BuNo 2117	SBD-2	2-B-2 BuNo 2104	SBD-2
2-B-4 2175	SBD-2	2-B-3 2115	SBD-2
2-B-5 4680	SBD-3	2-B-7 2163	SBD-2
2-B-6 2154	SBD-4	2-B-8 2127	SBD-2
2-B-16 2126	SBD-2	2-B-9 2176	SBD-2
		2-B-10 2121	SBD-2
		2-B-11 2116	SBD-2
		2-B-12 2143	SBD-2
		2-B-14 2113	SBD-2
		2-B-15 2114	SBD-2
		2-B-17 2157	SBD-2
		2-B-18 4655	SBD-3
2-B-13 crash landed aboard LEXINGTON, pushed over.			

VB-2 AIRPLANE ASSIGNMENTS AT CORAL SEA

Pilot	May 7 1942	May 8
LCdr. W.L. Hamilton	2-B-1(*)	2-B-3
Lt. R.W. Cousins	2-B-4	2-B-14
Lt. W.F. Henry	2-B-7	2-B-7
Lt. J.H. Newell	2-B-13	2-B-12
Lt(jg) R.B. Buchan	2-B-14(*)	2-B-1 VT*
Lt(jg) H.B. Bass	2-B-10	2-B-10
Lt(jg) P.J. Knapp	2-B-5	2-B-5 VT
Lt(jg) J.G. Sheridan	2-B-16	1-B-11
Lt(jg) J.O. Wood	2-B-8	2-B-8
Ens. A.J. Behl	---	2-B-6 VT
Ens. T.J. Ball	2-B-15 VT	---
Ens. J.M. Clarke	2-B-2 VT	2-B-16 VT
Ens. C.B. Connally	2-B-17	2-B-2
Ens. W.C. Edwards, Jr.	---	2-B-17
Ens. R.P. Lecklinder	2-B-18	2-B-18
Ens. F.R. McDonald	2-B-3	2-B-13 VT
Ens. J.A. Riley	2-B-6	---
Ens. A.A. Simmons	2-B-12	---
Ens. J.D. Wakeham	2-B-9	2-B-9
Ens. R.P. Williams	2-B-11	2-B-4 VT

VT indicates airplane was assigned to anti-torpedo patrol

* indicates one enemy aircraft shot down by pilot

(*) indicates enemy a/c shot down by gunner

VB-2 was credited with one other enemy airplane on 8 May but records do not indicate to which airplane it was attributed.