

**"Cleared Hot"**by **Lon Holtz**

Every time I try to write glowing words describing historical events of one of our skilled members, it gets harder. In the past, some of the great stories are remembered time and time again. The A-37's history was so successful that several friendly foreign countries purchased their own "Super Tweets" to meet operational needs. With our stories, we still cherish that great little bird and the guys who flew and the wrench hands who worked on her.

Time is taking its toll on us. Most of us probably couldn't even climb into the bird, and, even if we could, we would still be faced with trying to strap in. But one so-and-so has been able to hitch a ride: Hank Hoffman (that lucky, no good *#^@++!*).

We all still love the little bird and have worked hard to preserve its history through any means possible. Others have contributed as we see stories popping up on the Internet with hour-long renditions covering our history, all of which makes us wish we could still get hold of one and fly it at air shows. I'm that individual!

I'd like to take one out for a cruise some sunny afternoon, but, for most of us, that's just wishful thinking. HOWEVER!! Four members of our Association who were intrigued by the aircraft's history BOUGHT ONE!!! Maurice Hayes, a new member who lives in Papakua, New Zealand, flew his bird until recently. Here in the States, Charles Largay and Mark Peterson each owns and flies an operational A-37B in airshows and demonstrations.

Chris Stokes is now in the process of bringing back to life his A-37B, which he purchased in early 2022, transporting it from upstate New York to his home in Lincoln,

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July! What a great month in our nation's history.

With the help of AI, here is a list of significant events:

July 1: Beginning of the Battle of Gettysburg in 1863 and the Battle of the Somme in 1916.

July 2: Continental Congress voted for independence from Britain in 1776. Signing of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. President Garfield was shot in 1881. Amelia Earhart disappears in 1937.

July 4: Declaration of Independence approved by the Continental Congress in 1776. Death of two of our founding fathers in 1826: Thomas Jefferson and John Adams.

July 5: Newton's *Principia* explained the laws of motion and gravity. The French featured the first bikini in 1946.

July 7: Sliced bread introduced in 1928. Satchel Paige was born in Mobile, AL, in 1906.

July 8: First public reading of the Declaration of Independence in 1776. Flight of the first rigid airship by Count Ferdinand von Zeppelin, 1900. My birthday, 1940.

July 10: Battle of Britain begins, 1940.

July 16: Atomic bomb "Fat Boy" exploded in New Mexico, wiping out all plant and animal life within a mile, 1945.

July 20: Apollo 11 Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin became the first men to land on the moon, 1969.

July 21: Guam ceded to United States by Spain, 1898.

July 22: John Dillinger killed by FBI in Chicago, 1934.

July 27: Korean War ended, 1953.

July 30: Jimmy Hoffa disappeared, 1975.

These are by no means all of the significant events occurring in the month of July, but they'll do for now.....Jerry Sailors



"The A-37 Association is for those who flew, worked on/with, were saved by, or have high admiration for the great little fighter."



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The Dragonfly is a publication of the A-37 Association published quarterly (except when within two months of a reunion, then monthly), as a service to the membership, new contacts, and other interested parties.

The views expressed herein are those of the editors/authors and do not necessarily reflect any official position of the A-37 Association. The editors reserve the right to print any article/letter/email/photo deemed to be of interest to members.

We also reserve the right to edit any article to fit space available and to reject any material considered inappropriate. We invite and encourage members/contacts to submit articles/letters/emails/photos.

Member Update

Gone West

Jim Westbrook, 5 August 2025, Maplewood, MN

Obituary

Emails

(From Roger "Ramjet" Moseley, 21 April 2026)

Nice work, as usual. Sorry, when you always do excellent work it's hard to boost you above that.

Did I ever tell you about having Gen Slay as my wingman? LtCol Frank Sloan ordered me, so, I guess I'll do it. I actually refused, at first, by saying "find someone who wants some face time." Slay and I actually became friends across the wide gulf of 4-star (eventually) to Captain.

(Response to Ramjet, 22 April 2026)

Ramjet, you haven't told me the story about Gen Slay. Is it suitable for an article?

(See Ramjet's article on page 3.)

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(From Rick Toms, 22 April 2026)

Excellent newsletter! Pretty excited about the decision to have another reunion next year. Nancy and I would love to attend. George is still living independently, and his cancer is under control with his tumors in check. He's doing well medically but at 91 years young, his cognitive skills are declining. He's getting a lot of social interaction at his senior living facility and we're taking good care of him. Thanks again for a very informative newsletter.

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(From Mike Westbrook, 9 May 2026)

My name is Mike Westbrook. I am Jim's son. I just want to inform you my father passed away on Aug 5, 2025. I know he really enjoyed his discussions with your organization. Just thought you should know. Thanks.

(Response to Mike Westbrook, 11 May 2026)

Mike, thank you for the note about your dad. Please accept condolences from the A-37 Association. He will be listed in the Association's July newsletter as Gone West.

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(From Claude Newland, Rustics, 12 May 2026)

Rustics and Friends,

DRUM ROLL! Attached is our final Rustic Association newsletter.

We officially closed our association with the State of Florida on 30 January 2026, but the Board has been busy taking care of final details as explained in the newsletter.

Our first newsletter went out in 1996 when we floated the idea of having a Rustic reunion. That was 28 years ago and it's been a great 28 years! Thanks for the memories. Hand salute to all!!

Best to all for a peaceful and healthy future,

Claude Newland, Rustic 19, Editor

Lendy Edwards, Rustic 20, Formatter

Link to [FINI Rustic Newsletter](#) - Well done!

And a hand salute from the A-37 Association!

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(Continued from p. 1.)

Nebraska. After working hard to meet all FAA requirements and certifications, he made his maiden flight earlier this month and is probably flying his bird around a lot more than driving a car, conducting various flight tests. The A-37 Association offers a huge CONGRATULATIONS to Chris for this outstanding accomplishment. For those interested, Chris has a few videos of his recent flight tests posted on the A-37 Association Facebook page and on the A-37B Dragonfly (71-826) Facebook page.

All four of them are welcomed members of the A-37 Association. They have picked up the ball to show the world the little bird is still operational and writing its history. So, when we aren't here anymore to brag about the "Super Tweet," it will still be remembered.



War Story

"That's an order"

by Roger "Ramjet" Moseley

Frank K Sloan came up to me in the TUOC and told me that Gen Alton D Slay wanted to fly with us every Sunday. The F-4s were leaving Da Nang, and we were the last fighters in 'Nam.

Sloan said, "You're going to be the flight lead."

"I don't think so," I replied. "Pick someone that wants face time."

"Yes, you are," he said, and I said, "No, I'm not."

Then he uttered the killer phrase: "That's an order."

The next Sunday, Sloan goes down to pick up Slay at Tan Son Nhat and is back for an early brief, around 6 am. I start into the standard 30-40 minute brief and Slay gives me the killer stare that said "?? Kid, I've done this in two wars and more airplanes than you can name, so let's get on with it." He could stare a hole in a piece of armor plate! I sped it up and we head for the airplanes. All I can think is that Sloan is in the jet with him, I'm going to screw this up, and next week there'll be another flight lead.

Off we go. Jesus, he's crisp on the radio, jumps right on the wing, and is always right where I expect him to be. The Rustic FAC gives us the inbound brief. I tell Slay this is what we're going to do, me first, you second, me next, etc., and his bombs are incredible. Old guy, flies once a week, and his bombs are better than mine. Shit.



Ramjet and his jet

All he says is "2". We come off the target, he's on the wing most of the way back, then Sloan takes him to Tan Son Nhut. I can't wait to take a beating when Sloan gets back to Bien Hoa. But there's nothing, zero, not a word. We did that every Sunday for maybe two months, then I DEROSed.

Flying with him was amazing. We got to a target on one mission where the sun was up at 25,000', but it was clearly nighttime in the target area. He was not allowed to divebomb at "night." The friendlies really needed us, and I just said, "Two, it looks like daytime to me," and all he said was "roger that." On one mission I had to "modify" his ROE (remember, he was the Air Boss for all SVN missions) and all he ever said was "roger."

One of my last weekday missions turned out to be one with a "no structures" restriction. I could see the gunfire coming from a structure, but the FAC wouldn't let me hit it. So, I decided to call back to (what was the Tan Son Nhut command center?) and ask for special permission. The duty officer and I went back and forth about this and just about the time I had implied I was going to do it anyway, the duty officer said,

"Roger (Jesus, how does he know my name?) do you know who you are talking to?"

Holy Crap, it's Slay! I say, "Yes, Sir."

"Are you going to attack that structure?"

"No, Sir."

"Good answer." That was it.

I don't think I talked to him again until after he retired, except when we had that reunion party at England and he came over as the ATC Commander in a T-38. But I did use his name once to advance my career.

In 1978 I had a by-name request to go back and teach at the Test Pilot School. AFSC Personnel had other ideas, so I called officer assignments and explained to them how they hadn't checked how perfect I was for TPS. Still "no."

So I told the Colonel who was head of officer assignments that I was going to jump in a jet, come to Andrews, and have a talk with Gen (now 4-star) Slay. The Colonel actually laughed and said Slay would never see me. My response was "Really, my wingman won't see me?" and hung up.

Before I could schedule the cross country, maybe thirty minutes later, I got a call from officer assignments. It was a short conversation, but the gist of it was "we took another look at your record, and you're right, you're perfect for TPS."



General Slay and Ramjet



War Story 2

YAT-37D Flight Test Program

by John Sullivan

In June 1963, I was assigned to the Flight Test Engineering Division at Edwards AFB. I had previously been assigned to Edwards in 1958-59 as the Avionics Maintenance Officer for the Convair F-106 Joint Test Force. I also flew many of the F-106 test flights. After a short stay at the first ADC F-106 squadron as an IP and maintenance officer, I was selected to attend Texas A&M and received a degree in Electrical Engineering. My first assignment on this 1963 tour was as a flight test engineer and pilot on the F4C test program.

The A-37 project started to come together in 1963 with Cessna building two prototypes (950 and 951), identified as the YAT-37D.

I was assigned as the project engineer for the flight test program at Edwards AFB. It was not a very big test as it consisted of a project pilot, project engineer, crew chief and a Cessna technical representative. It was supported by other maintenance and armament personnel at Edwards. It was a part-time job for both me and the project pilot. My full-time job was the F4C test program. The project pilot was an X-5 pilot.

My first experience with the A-37 was in November 1963 at the Cessna factory in Wichita. The Cessna test pilot was Jim Lasuere. He was later killed in an A-37

test. I believe his daughter attended an A-37 reunion in Wichita. Aircraft 950 remained at Cessna for further flight and structural tests.

We received the test aircraft, 951, at Edwards in January 1964 and flew 80 test flights that resulted in about 100 recommendations. I participated as a pilot but was usually flying the photo chase aircraft.

After the Edwards tests, 951 went to Eglin AFB for a while to be flown by some TAC pilots in competition with the Navy A4 and A1 Skyraider. Nobody there was

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enthusiastic about the A-37. The airplane was returned to Edwards for disposition. The test aircraft was very similar to the production model. However, at the time of the Edwards test program the structural tests had not been completed. Therefore, the max gross weight was somewhat lower than the production version. There were only 6 external store stations on the YAT-37D rather than the 8 stations on the production aircraft.

On June 19, 1964, President Johnson visited Edwards AFB to review the many USAF and NASA projects. I was given a last-minute notice to prepare a briefing for the President who would review the aircraft on the flight line along with other COIN aircraft, including a turboprop T28 and a modified B26. However, the night before his visit, President Johnson stated that we did not need jet aircraft in Vietnam. This forced a change in plans and the COIN aircraft were moved to a hanger so the President could view the aircraft out of sight of the press and public. The President never did visit the hangar and remained within the view of the press and public during most of his short visit. My sons got to shake his hand on the flight line, but I never saw him. The Secretary of the Air Force, FAA head, and others did stop by the YAT-37D.

The President's statement prompted us to modify the YAT-37D with a wooden propeller on the pitot tube in the accompanying photo. That apparently did not work either. The test aircraft (951) was subsequently moved to the USAF Museum. In 1967 the aircraft was moved out of the museum and returned to Cessna as a test bed for the A-37 program and the subsequent Combat Dragon project. After the Cessna test program was completed, the aircraft was returned to the USAF Museum where it can be seen today.

I moved on as the Project Engineer and pilot for the F-111 test program. Then to AFCSC, A-37 training, and Bien Hoa.

