

The Further Adventures of
YOUTHLY PURESOME

by CDR Jack D. Woodul, USNR(Ret), artwork by Carl Snow



As he whanged his empty Lone Star long neck down on the bar and gently petitioned the innkeeper for "a 'other cold beer," Puresome figured that, technically, his presence at happiness hour at the O' Club was in compliance with current directives.

The Chugalug Champion of Chase Field



His daddy, COL P.A. Puresome, Texas A&M Class of '34, had always maintained that he "could not abide a man who'd run with the cows all week and try to be a bull on the weekend." What the colonel meant to say was that office pinkies and town kids that wore cologne, matched socks and voluntarily hung around females customarily forsook their chores and did not help out around the

place. True bullism was a full time job, validated by a week's worth of smelly, hard work.

Matching Socks and Eau d'Juarez

Saturday night, when all the chores were done, was when you got to have a tub bath, shine your boots and chase the girls. Just showing up for manly events on weekends didn't count, and was probably the province of "nancy" boys.

The very Youthly Puresome wasn't an office pinkie, hated chores, actually cared if his socks matched and would have drenched himself in Eau d'Juarez, if he had some, just to cover the feedlot smells wafting up from the back of his daddy's pickup. It took eventually going off to college in the libertine big city to challenge the code of conduct much, but the essential truth was that *mujers* were fascinating critters from some light-blue planet who thought in Sanscrit and spent an extraordinary amount of time being angry at hombres for doing what hombres do. Like most of COL Puresome's practical sayings, it was easier to do righteous bull stuff most of the time and indulge in wary forays into cow country occasionally. Even after the thunderbolt of the encounter with Signorina Delmundo and subsequent matrimonials, Puresome still knew that a man had to do what a man had to do. And that involved running with bulls some.

Puresome Versus the Marine Corps

Which was what Puresome was doing at happiness hour: drinking cold beers, waving hands with fellow student Naval Aviators and listening respectfully to the salty stories of instructor pilots, most of whom would much rather be back in the fleet hassling each other rather than students. Life in the Advanced Training Command took lots of hard studying for both academic subjects and proper methods of flying the Grumman Ironworks TF-9J and AF-9J *Cougars* about the Texas skies. Students not being perfect, some strain and yelling was involved. Sometimes, shiny gold wings still seemed a long way off. Happiness hour was a good way to cut yourself some slack before hitting the books again.

"Though ... your ... nostril's ... like a stovepipe, Nellie darlin'," sang a quartet of Marine instructor pilots in a tender rendition of what Puresome was to learn was the real Marine Corps anthem. 1LT Sumo's falsetto rendering was exceptionally poignant as it filtered through the cigar smoke.

Student Naval Aviator Puresome was doing an exceptional job of stress-shedding when someone came up with the idea of a chugalug contest. The technical procedures of the contest were not nearly as difficult



as "chop, prop, flop, 110 drop" from the early days at Saufley Field flying the Maytag Messerschmitt T-34 — all that was involved was opening one's throat to maximum diameter, tossing down a stein of cold beer in absolute minimum time with only minor spillage, and placing the empty mug upside-down on top of one's crewcut to signal a done deal.

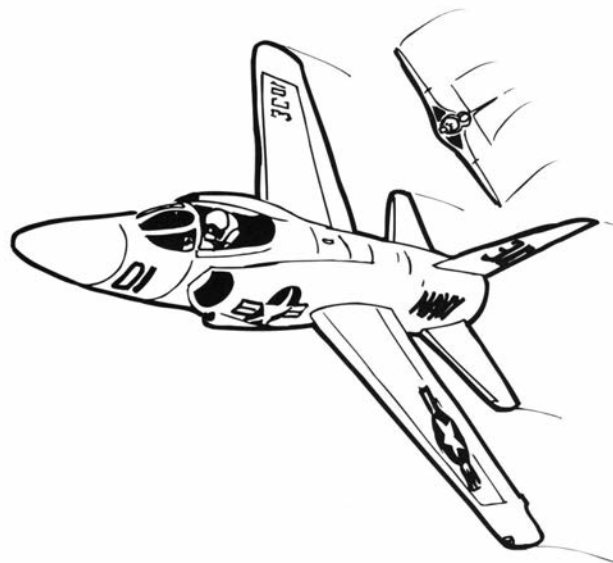
"I can do that!" thought Puresome, who went squinty-eyed at the possibility of kicking some butt, since he had double-minored in beer-gulping and jalapeno-chomping during his collegiate days.



It was a piece of cake. But what Puresome had not really reckoned with was the depth of competition. Elimination round followed elimination round of enthusiastic, though less-talented brethren. Though filthy work, it had to be done. Puresome sucked it up and took on all comers. The goose grease in his crewcut fought a losing battle with dregs from near-empty steins.

The Final Round for the Winner

It came down to Puresome and the honor of the Corps. 1LT Sumo had dispatched his opponents with the same ease that he had whooped up on unwary F-11 *Tiger* drivers from the tactics squadron in his single-seat *Cougar*. It was this same loud tact that had demolished marks on the left hand side of his fitness reports, establishing him as a large first lieutenant for life.



Guitars strummed and schoolmarms swooned as the Pride of the Corps and the Portales Gonsleenger drew fresh beers and faced off. Spurs chinged and clocks ticked loud tocks as the big hands twitched toward high noon and each snake-eyed opponent waited for the other to make his play.

ILT Sumo roared into action first, but Puresome's right hand, already a registered weapon, went into its thousand-mile-an-hour act, doused the contents of the mug quickly and accurately down his throat. With only a little beer running off the top of his head and from the sides of his silly-assed grin, Puresome checked out how his opponent had done.

ILT-For-Life Sumo was gagging, dancing around like mad and making indelicate noises. Puresome was totally perplexed by his easy victory until the Marine was able to extract a partial dental plate that had come unhinged by the violence of his attack on the beer mug and slud a significant distance down his throat. Puresome didn't give a damn: A kill was a kill.

The Champeen Meets Signorina Delmundo

When he finally made it home to the beautiful, above-garage apartment in downtown Beeville, Puresome could not understand the lack of appreciation for his feat by the child bride, who reminded him that he was yet mortal and had flunked taking out the trash yet again. But Puresome was flushed with victory and cold beer, and knew that there was always another day to excel at trash and good graces.

Besides, Tunita had long ago kind of extended a grim blessing to Friday afternoon male bonding.

"You go ahead and go to happiness hour," Puresome was advised, "but I'm gonna go buy some shoes." Thus, ENS Puresome had taken some serious hits in the checkbook section, and the child bride's closet came close to qualifying as a shoe mine.

Dreamtime came in fuzzy confusion of whirling mugs and spinning aircraft on one side of the bed and rows of neatly arranged pumps and cute little flats in colors to match dresses and accessories on the other.

In the middle of the blackest part of the night, Puresome moaned the moan of the high-pressure sump light and rolled out of the sack. But, unexplainably, the vast quantities of cold beer had tumbled his gyros and he was lost and in pain in the dark apartment. With no time to climb,

confess and conserve, Puresome stumbled over chairs and shoes in the blackness, confused and in danger, knowing that his moments were numbered. A new verse in the Navy Hymn was being written for "those in peril up the stairs!"

Inspiration born of desperation guided Puresome to the open screened window just as the overpressure valve vented itself.

"Timing is everything!" Puresome thought as his eyes rolled back in his head in relief in avoiding a really troublesome system failure. A fine mist rolled back from the window screen.

A bright light snapped on and the huge face and voice of the Avenging Angel of Reason roared out, "What in the hell are you doing?"

"Shhhhh!" was as good as Puresome could come up with before he finished, the lights went out, and he did a one-and-a-half-with-a-full-twist into the easy chair. It should be pointed out in his defense that ENS Puresome's aim did not deteriorate during the above distractions.

Hard Lessons Learned

When came the morning, the gentle calling of the mourning dove (or the hooting of local owls, as Tunita proclaimed with an inaccurate certainty designed to drive Puresome crazy), filtered through the booming of the big base drum behind Puresome's eyeballs. He found himself awkwardly draped across the easy chair by the window in a state of careless undress and a certain amount of pain. Somehow, he was not surprised when he was not offered sympathy nor the respect due to his new title, but was spared only through intensive plea-bargaining, involving penance, Lysol and a scrub brush.

It was not pretty. Puresome had taken some definite hits and continued to take sniper fire for a while to come. But, in the after years, he always remembered that if you ran with the bulls, you were bound to take a few horns.

But it was worth it if you got to be Champeen in the process.