

The Further Adventures of  
**YOUTHLY PURESOME**

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*Naval Aviator's Dictionary: "Seagull: he who hates to fly and squawks like hell when he has to, especially at night."*

The only thing the RJOA (Reserve Junior Officers Association) enjoyed more than a really good bolter, seen from the vantage point of the ready room PLAT, was to have some poor soul down an airplane before a launch without a really good reason, i.e., aircraft suffered unexplainable thermal meltdown right there on the flight deck before the preflight.

Since everybody knew that all an A-4 needed to launch was a motor, a wing and some wheels, anybody actually downing a plane was tried and convicted of Seagullism.



Especially on your dark and stormy nights, those RJOA safely in the ready room saw to it that some sort of cartoon questioning the downer's masculinity graced the blackboard upon his return. When the downer either slunk or blustered in, he was pelted with popcorn kernels from the 50-pound bag next to the movie projector and assailed with "Bock! Bock! Bock!" — the cry of the seagull. Of course, if it was someone who could really make trouble — like the skipper or XO — the RJOA greeting was usually less overt.

So it was that on this cruise, the air wing was joined with a squadron of jarheads so top-heavy in rank that their skipper was actually senior to CAG. Their heavies, the Colonel, his XO and Ops officer — Major Mother — were showing the way to the rest of their squadron (who were just shinier versions of the Navy junior officers) before they mucked off to Chu Lai or some other garden spot.

So it was that Youthly Puresome was not on the night schedule, but his pals Weed and Worm were. That suited Puresome, because it was not nice out and because Ready Six was supposed to be screening "Bike Dykes from Hell," one of Puresome's sentimental favorites. Thus was he spared.

Aircraft had been manned for the launch and had turned up. In the red gloom, aviators ran through their post-start checks. As they finished, they checked in to Pri-Fly with their status.

"Sidewinder 411, on deck and up."

"Jolly Roger 203, on deck and up."

"Sidewinder 409, on deck and up." And so on.

Then, "Guntrain, this is Jarboon 301. I think I'm gonna be down ..."

"Roger, Jarboon 301, keep us advised."

"Guntrain, Jarboon 301, probably maybe gonna be down ... bubbles in the wet compass."

"Roger, Jarboon."

"Guntrain, Jarboon 301 is down."

"Roger, Jarboon 301, understand ..."

"Bock!...Bock! Bock!...Bock!" interrupted the radio.

"...You're ("Bock! Bock! Bockedy-bock!") down," Guntrain doggedly replied through the "bocks" that infested the airwaves.

"Bockedy-bock-bock-bock!"

"Who said that? Whooo said that," came the Colonel's voice from Jarboon 301, "I want to know who said that right now!"

"Bock!" was the answer from out of the ether.

And so the launch launched without Jarboon 301, and the Colonel beelined it to the CAG office and You Will'ed CAG that he (a) find, and (b) eviscerate or (c) desecrate the phantom bocker to restore the honor of the Corps.



CAG had been a *Phantom* puke in his previous life, and all those hours squinting at a radar scope had given him a devious slant on situational awareness. Looking at the squadrons involved in the launch, he quickly eliminated everyone except the *Sidewinders*, who were known to have an unruly element. It was child's play to see which *Sidewinders* were flying and to quickly settle on either Worm or Weed.

Both Worm and Weed, it turns out, were bickers. Secure in the anonymity of the airwaves, their strength was as the strength of ten as they successfully completed their practice CCAs and trapped back aboard.

Weed tripped down to the dirty shirt wardroom, downed four or five PB and J's and a quart or so of bug juice. With that accomplished, he repaired to the rack.

Worm, however, was a restless night stalker and, being an LSO with CAG office privileges, was reading messages there when CAG walked in. Military courtesies were rendered.



CAG acted if nothing was amiss and started doing CAG stuff, though actually positioning himself for a down-the-throat Fox-One. Worm, however, with ex-NavCad cunning, realized immediately he was being stalked. He was ready when the shot came.

“Nossir, I don’t know anything about any bocks. That’s my story, and I’m sticking to it,” Worm lied smoothly through his even, white teeth.

Though physical torture wasn’t out of the question, CAG decided to table that option for later, since he still had one suspect to go. He resolved that since a direct frontal assault hadn’t worked, a sneak-in from six o’clock was in order.

Came the dawn, and Weed was up and at ’em in name only. Being truly happy only in the air or in the rack, Weed was in neither state since he had to wave the early launch. So it was that his mind was clouded when he wandered into the CAG office.

Nothing seemed amiss. Yeomen scuttled about, staff puked did staff

puke stuff and CAG was administering. Weed bumbled about looking for the LSO book.

“You were pretty funny with them bocks last night,” murmured CAG slyly as he surveyed Weed from over the top of his granny glasses.

“Yup, I sure was,” absently replied Weed, whose considerable intelligence was temporarily on sabbatical to the University of Mars.

“Gotcha!” exclaimed CAG as his verbal missile locked on, tracked the target flawlessly, flew up Weed’s tailpipe and exploded.

It may not have been darkness, decay or the red death that descended on Weed’s dominion, but it was close. It was a junior officer snafu of titanic proportions.

But in the ages since, the legend has grown among the RJOA that the Phantom Bocker did not die, but escaped for the time being into the voids of the ship to await dark and stormy nights to reemerge as the seagull’s worst nightmare.