

Ferris Remarks 9/30/2012 (770 words without header)

Thanks Walt, for the touching presentation.

Walt and I have known each other for the past 40 years, including during the creation of my 25 foot high by 75 foot wide B-17 and Jet Aviation murals in the National Air & Space Museum.

Thanks too, dear friends Charlie and Ann Cooper, who are responsible for my being considered for this honor.

....and I have to thank Peggy, who decided early on, to join my dream...with all of the sacrifices that this was bound to bring.

I also thank our children Nancy and Todd, who, without choice, have lived this as well. This was brought home when Nancy's Kindergarten teacher called to say that as students were asked to report what their dads did for a living, our Nancy responded: "My Daddy doesn't do anything; he stays home and draws airplanes!"

And.... draw airplanes I do.

As you saw, I've been drawing airplanes from life since four or five years old when I depicted visiting aircraft on those grass flying fields at Kelly.

Bud Dallmann, my boss in that summer job at Randolph, became my mentor, guiding my future career as an artist. He warned me: **First I had to learn to be an artist!**

**Then learn production, photography, typesetting, and printing!**

**Never to take a job that will not further my art career.....**

**...and don't even consider painting until I mastered pencil drawing; ink line drawing, and black and white tonal painting!**

As it turned out, I did not tackle **color** for a full **ten years**.

My art involves **drawing and engineering**, rather than **photography**, and relying on the **three primary colors**, as learned during my printing experience.

As Air Force contracts ended in St Louis, we knew that aerospace company headquarters were based in Rockefeller Center with their advertising agencies on Madison Avenue.

New York was our obvious destination.

Peggy and I left secure jobs, sold our little house in Missouri, put our furniture in storage and, **knowing only one person** in the New York area, packed up our 1 year old daughter and, with \$1000 in savings, drove east for a brand-new start.

A search of Aviation Trade magazines revealed advertising agency art directors and artists knew little of aviation.

**My job became keeping av/art directors out of trouble.**

Having served as an illustrator, I had never even attempted a fine art painting to hang on the wall!

Society of Illustrators membership and the Air Force Art Program meant: **Painting for the first time for posterity.**

Since 1961, all of my art has been created as if fine art for display regardless of purpose.

My clients loved it... as this expanded possible uses for commissioned art.

For Air Force Art, I concentrated on jet training and fighter operations, finding to my surprise that, **though a visiting artist, instructor pilots invariably expected me to fly the airplane.**

In my brief 1953 civilian pilot training experience, I had logged a total of **11 and one half hours** of tail dragger time (including two solos in the J-3 Cub).

In 1963 alone I found myself flying the T-38, T-37, T-33 and the F-100, in that order!

With this new experience, I found myself **no longer painting “airplanes”, but painting “the unique lighting of flight”.**

Since my very first art tours, units have treated me as one of their own rather than as an outside visitor.

The highlight of fifty years of flying was my 1968 deployment across the Pacific as a civilian back-seater with the first F-4Es to enter the war, replacing veteran F-105s at Korat, Thailand.

Another was the full eight weeks of flying with the Weapons Schools at Nellis, experiencing employment of each fighter type from the F-100 up through the F-15 and F-16.

**My special thanks go out to everyone who shook that stick and said “your jet””**

**We are joined tonight by many of our aviator and artist friends for whom we are most grateful. You have each played an integral part in our lives.**

With the impressive accomplishments of Ms. Cobb, General Quesada and Doctor Whitcomb, it is a particular honor to be part of the class of 2012.

There is irony in that my Dad and General Quesada served together in their early careers. My Dad, then Lt. “Lisle” Ferris and, then Lt. “Pete” Quesada, shared back-to-back Regular Army Serial numbers: My Dad’s was: O-16730 and Pete’s: O-16731.

I thank the National Aviation Hall of Fame for this remarkable honor as I join the very humbling 50 year list of enshrinees, many of whose achievements I’ve been privileged to record on canvas. Thank you all!