

Minutes of February 15, 2025
Regular Membership Meeting
of the Verde Valley Amateur Radio Association

Location: El Tereo Restaurant, Clarkdale
Scheduled Meeting Time: 1:00 PM

An informal luncheon was available commencing at 11:30 AM. Most of the 25 VVARA members and four guests who attended the 1:00 PM regular meeting also attended the informal luncheon.

Introduction & Welcome to Guests:

Bill Jean, KK7LGE, VVARA President, convened the meeting at 1:15 PM. All members rose and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Bill Jean then welcomed all members and recognized Ed Loesche, KG7NLH, from Clarkdale, a new VVARA member and a regular check in now on the Knobby Knee Net. Bill and Bob Smith, WB6ODR, Anita's Elmer, also welcomed new Extra Class ham, Anita Colebrooke, KK7VTJ. Anita recently became a licensed amateur radio operator achieving perfect scores on her Novice and Technician examination and a near perfect score on her Extra class license test. Anita resides in Cottonwood and has already checked into the Knobby Knee Net. Anita has joined VVARA and just received her new Extra Class vanity call sign, AC7AL. Another guest who attended the meeting is Mark Napier, KK7YDL, another new ham licensee who now regularly joins the Knobby Knee Net. The new members received a warm welcome and a round of applause.

Guest Speaker: VVARA Treasurer & Webmaster Don Sears, N7PLL, then introduced his neighbor & our guest speaker, William O'Hara, Lt. Col. USMC (Ret). Bill joined the US Marine Corps in 1969, served in multiple tours overseas, rose through the ranks to become a Lieutenant Colonel and served our country with distinction for 25 years. Upon retirement from active service, Bill became a commercial pilot for American Airlines. On retiring as a commercial pilot, Bill joined the faculty of Embry Riddle Aeronautical University and taught a variety of aviation related courses for 17 years. Bill was welcomed with an enthusiastic round of applause.

Bill gave an interesting and dynamic presentation using a slide deck to illustrate his presentation. Among the topics that Bill covered included his experience flying Mc Donald Douglas F4 Phantoms and Hawker Siddeley Harrier aircraft in close air support for USMC troops engaged in battles. Bill spoke eloquently about the challenges Harrier pilots faced flying the Vertical Take-off and Landing and Short Take off and Landing (VTOL/STOL) aircraft which Bill said was like trying to stand on a basketball. Bill talked about the unique ability of Harrier jets to provide close in air support because they can hover low to the ground to avoid detection but come in at high speed (up to Mach 1.2) to provide close in support when ground troops needed aerial support.

For those interested in more technical details about the Harrier jets, please see Bill's slide deck available from VVARA Treasurer and Webmaster, Don Sears, N7PLL, and an article in Wikipedia, *Hawker Siddeley Harrier*, which recounts some of the history that Bill discussed about the first acquisition by the USMC of Harrier jets in 1971 and efforts over the ensuing years to upgrade these aircraft with equipment and armaments to better meet USMC combat needs. Bill's presentation covered multiple interesting topics

including his experience as a test pilot for the Harrier jets which were deployed as AV-8A jets in USMC squadrons, handling characteristics, and the punishing G Forces an extremely fast maneuverable aircraft has on the pilots, etc.

As a senior USMC Harrier instructor pilot, Bill was assigned the duty to head a USMC team to assist a Hollywood film crew led by Director James Cameron in making the 1994 comedy-drama movie, **True Lies** (starring Arnold Schwarzenegger, Jamie Lee Curtis, Tom Arnold, and Bill Paxton).

Bill O'Hara actually flew the Harrier jet seen in the movie. (The movie depicts Arnold Schwarzenegger as flying. Schwarzenegger is depicted as flying the aircraft and busily rescuing a woman in distress seated at the front of the Harrier jet just in front of the of open cockpit window facing Schwarzenegger while Schwarzenegger is simultaneously defending against a knife-wielding terrorist behind him and trying to slash him with the knife.) Three simultaneous harrowing tasks! Only in Hollywood ... !

Bill O'Hara was inundated with questions about his career, the Harrier jet and the 2004 popular movie. He answered them all with grace, humility, and wit.

Due to the length of the Speaker presentation and Q&A, President Bill Jean, KK7LGE, called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:45 PM. The motion was seconded and adopted by acclaim. All regular and new business discussions are continued to the 1:00 PM March 15, 2005 meeting at the Prescott Gold Club in Dewey, AZ

Minutes respectfully submitted this 12th day of March, 2025

Tim Sullivan, AC7TB, VVARA Secretary