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Beacher

911 Franklin Street • Michigan City, IN 46360
219/879-0088 • FAX 219/879-8070
e-mail: News/Articles - salym@thebeacher.com
e-mail: Classifieds - classads@thebeacher.com
http://www.thebeacher.com/

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In Case Of Emergency, Dial

911

Off They Go! Continued from Page 1

At that time, he said his grades "weren't much better than a C average" so he enlisted in the Naval Cadet Program in July, but wasn't called for training at Pensacola, FL, until December.

During his training, Read was stationed at four different fields from Mobile, Ala., to Pensacola and later was assigned to all-weather flight training in Corpus Christi, Texas. He concluded his training at Cherry Point, NC, and in May 1955 was commissioned as a pilot in the Marines.

When he signed up, the U.S. was at war in Korea, but shortly after, the armistice was signed. By the time he became a pilot, the fighting war was over. Still, his first overseas assignment was to South Korea. He later was stationed in Japan, and finished his active duty in St. Louis, MO, with a Marine Aviation Reserve Training Detachment. He remained in the Marine Reserves, retiring with the rank of captain.

"I have a lot of pride in being in the Marines. After I got out, I flew in the reserves out of Glenview in Illinois."



Indiana Aviation Museum founder Jim Read poses at the wing of an A-37 Dragonfly, a light combat jet aircraft, in the museum hangar at Porter County Municipal Airport. (Photo by Rick A. Richards)

After his discharge, Read used the GI Bill to become a flight instructor. At that time, he was flying out of Phillips Airport in Michigan City, which today is Michigan City Municipal Airport.

But as much as Read loved flying, he wasn't making much of a living from it. So he went into



This AT-6G "Texan" is on display at the Indiana Aviation Museum in Valparaiso. (Photo by Rick A. Richards)

the family's banking business at Chesterton State Bank, from which he is now retired.

By working at the bank, Read was able to financially fuel his love of flying, first with a 1958 Arrow that he and his brother leased from a Gary company. Later, he said the opportunity came to buy a twin Commanche Piper, so they sold the Arrow and bought the Piper, which they completely refurbished.

In 1992, Read said the opportunity came along to buy a T34 Beechcraft trainer, a plane that's part of the museum today. (Seen on the cover.)

"That was a four-year rebuild project," said Read, who has flown the plane to events in Lakeland, FL, and Oshkosh, WI.

Later, Read found one of the jewels of his collection, a 1945 F4U-5N Corsair, but the problem was the plane was in England.

"We dickered around for awhile and finally made a deal," said Read, who had the plane shipped to Jacksonville, FL, after plans to fly it to the U.S. couldn't be completed.

But as much as Read loved that plane, he recently sold it to another collector. Read said he hated to see the plane go, but it went to a collector who will make sure it is well maintained.

Read said that particular plane served as one of 22 Corsairs in the Honduran Air Force and was involved in combat in the 1969 conflict with El Salvador.