



SoAR571.com

May-June 2002



Atlanta Naval Air Station Air Show

By Steve Bellio

As the Southern Area Rocketry (SoAR) public relations guy, I am supposed to come up with cool ideas that promote SoAR and rocketry. Doing demo launches, meeting with the Scouts and Civil Air Patrol cadets, displays at local hobby shops, etc. are fun, but for most SoAR volunteers, they had "been there, done that". I wanted to do something different, something big, new and exciting. But what would it be?

Well, that question was answered at our March club meeting when Roy Green suggested we have a booth at the Naval Air Station (NAS) Air Show. We didn't know when the show was or if the Navy would be interested in having a rocket club in attendance, but I promised to find out. The following Monday, I found the NAS web site and a contact number. I called and spoke to June Green, one of the Air Show organizers. When I told her who we were and what we wanted to do, she was very excited. She had one question... how much would we charge to appear at the show and conduct

some demonstration launches? I couldn't believe what I was hearing. I told her there was no charge, we would be honored to participate. She put me in touch with Lt. Commander Jeff Gauger, the Air Boss, and he was just as excited as June. Lt. Commander Gauger, or GoGo, had been to high power launches before and was familiar with rocketry. We had something in common! GoGo and I discussed

what might happen and I went back to the club with some ideas. The first order of business was to have a planning meeting. I'm guessing that 50 e-mails shot back and forth prior to the meeting, so we were well on

our way when we finally sat down at a table. Ideas were discussed, work items distributed and the groundwork was laid. Yes, we were on our way. Which was a good thing, because the Air Show was less than two months away. As you may suspect, much work went into the planning and preparation. I really don't want to go into it, but let it suffice to say

(Continued on page 2)

Inside this issue:

| | |
|------------------|-----|
| NAS Show | 1-5 |
| From the Website | 5 |



(Continued from page 1)

that a new banner was designed and purchased, schedules were developed for volunteers and for flying the rockets, our club brochure, which was nearly done, was finished up and hundreds printed, and many, many little details were handled. When Friday, May 17th got here, seven of us descended on the air base with tables, a VCR, a TV, LDRS videos, a 12 foot tall frame to display our new banner, about 40 rockets ranging from Micro-Maxx to a level 3 behemoth, brochures, 75 issues of Sport Rocketry magazine, compliments of the NAR, club newsletters, display stands and much more. I have to admit that we really were ready! We are good! Terry Bliss, Dale Windsor, Ken Frye, David Shontell, Ron Stancil and I met at a nearby restaurant before 11:00 am to talk about set up and have an early lunch. We finished up and headed over to the air base for our noon set up. As we were leaving the restaurant, we ran into Joe Brooks, another volunteer. So we were seven. Once at the air base at our designated position in hangar one, we quickly set up tables, the banner and displays. We put out all of our rockets, except for some large, nicely finished rockets donated by Burl Finkelstein. Burl had allowed us to borrow his Phoenix, an impressive certification level 3 rocket, a large LOC V-2 and a large Mercury Redstone. Believe me when I say you could see his rockets from across the hangar. They were a huge draw when the crowds showed up on Saturday. But, I'm getting ahead of myself. We finished building our display in the hangar, placed some poles and rope out near the flight line for rocket prepping on Saturday, and put a canopy frame out on the ramp for our static display. The whole time we were

working, we were also witness to a lot of practice flying by the main air show attractions, the aerial acts. A private air show for us and 200 of our closest friends. Nice! We watched the planes for a while and departed the air base about 4:00, just in time to hit Friday rush hour in Atlanta. Smooth move on our part, but it was worth it. Saturday dawned cool, moist and windy. Weather forecasts indicated it would get into the high 60's or low 70's, but with constant 15-20 MPH winds, it felt much colder. Needless to say, our demo launch at 4:00 got scrubbed early in the day. However, when I told the Air Boss we felt it wasn't prudent to fly in those conditions, he suggested that we might be able to fly Sunday afternoon when the final act was on the ground. That was good news, as we had previously planned to fly on both Saturday and Sunday, but Sunday had been cancelled the week before due to scheduling issues. Anyway, back to Saturday morning... David Shontell and his son, Neal were the first to arrive a bit before 8:00am. They brought beverages so we wouldn't have to spend big bucks buying from the vendors. I showed up a few minutes later with water and ice for the cooler. We were rolling! Key Frye and his son, Chris, arrived 30 minutes later, freeing up David and I to go get our single use motor and motor casing displays out of the club trailer. We also grabbed Burl's big rockets. Burl's rockets generated a steady stream of interested

(Continued on page 3)





(Continued from page 2)

people all day long. And so many guys came by and said "I used to do this when I was a kid". We handed out dozens and maybe hundreds of club brochures, and talked to a great many people. Keith Hudgins, David Shontell, Terry Bliss and Dale Windsor were very chatty and almost always engaged with a potential new club member. The rest of us helped out when needed, watched some of the acts and ate expensive burgers. Oh, and I shouldn't forget to mention that we endured the non-stop wind whenever we ventured outside the hangar. But it was worth it to see F-14, F-18, F/A-18, F-15, F-117 and MIG-17 demonstrations, and so much more. Although I am a huge fan of the fighter jets, I was also very impressed with the precision flying of the Red Barons, the Oreck XL and others. We had a very good time watching the air acts, but our main goal was to expose a large number of people to the hobby of rocketry. We felt that flying rockets immediately after the show would accomplish that goal, but it turned out that our display brought them in. Flying would have been the icing on the cake. Anyway, we still had Sunday and we were really hoping the weather would allow us to throw a few birds into the air then. We tidied up our area, putting motor casings and propellant into the trailer, and went home for the evening. Sunday arrived and we were missing one thing... the wind. Looking into my backyard at 9:00 that morning, I just knew we were going to get a chance to conduct our demo launch after the show. Alas, I am still not psychic and I'm a terrible meteorologist. It was not to happen. I was working the late shift, so I didn't get to the air show until nearly

1:00 in the afternoon. Many of the guys showed up then, to help prep rockets and work the launch, and to help tear down the booth. The winds, while not nearly as strong as the day before, were still blowing and in the wrong direction. So, after very little discussion, it was decided that once again, in the name of safety, we would decline to launch any rockets.



Although it was a huge disappointment, I am really proud that we didn't rationalize a bit and attempt to go ahead with the launch. After all, that was the biggest reason we were at the air show. It proved to me that we really are a mature and safety conscious club. Maybe next year! In conclusion, I can only say that it was a lot of work to plan, but thanks to the



volunteers of Southern Area Rocketry, we pulled it off with great panache and aplomb. We really did it right. However, we're already talking about the improvements we can make for the next show. The volunteers of SoAR not only promoted the club and rocketry, but we had a great time watching the acts and socializing with the crowd and each other. For me, it was a very rewarding experience for many reasons, but once again, I must say that the event was made better because of my friends in



(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

the club. I do want to thank the great guys that put so much time and effort into this quality endeavor. They truly were the key to our success. Dale Windsor, creator of the new brochure, brought a bunch of rockets to display and LDRS videos to play. He was also a big part of the planning, helped set up, and although he didn't see any action in this capacity, he was also the Range Supervisor. Thanks Dale! Ken Frye took care of having the beautiful new banner made, as well as shirts and hats (every volunteer that worked the booth or helped plan got a free shirt). He brought the TV, VCR, table, grease board, and other necessary items. He was very involved in the planning, helped set up and tear down, and was our Static Display Coordinator. I could go on, but I don't want to give him a big head. His new hat wouldn't fit then. I should mention that Ken was there all weekend, staffing the booth. Way to go, Ken! I can't say enough about David (I can build anything) Shontell, for his immense contribution to the effort, including things he built like display boards, free-standing poles, etc. He also got the trailer to the NAS, help set up and tear down, offered a wealth of ideas during the planning and was always there whenever we needed him, including all three days of the air show. He was also the Hangar Booth Coordinator and although he didn't really volunteer for the position, he never mentioned that I roped him into it and he did a tremendous job. Thanks David!!! Terry Bliss, another key idea guy, helped all three days, including set up and tear down. Terry brought his son's framework that held our new banner well above the crowd. Terry was

instrumental in the planning and execution of this event, and he brought with him the single biggest draw that we had... corn chips. Actually, Terry went well out of his way to pick up Burl Finkelstein's immense Phoenix, which served as Burl's level 3 rocket. Terry also grabbed Burl's very large V-2 and a nicely finished Mercury Redstone. Way to go, Terry!

Keith Hudgins was involved in the planning, wrote scripts for the demo launches that never were and worked the booth on Saturday. Thanks! Ron Stancil was also in the thick of things. Ron brought some great rockets for display, his cool, hand-crafted rocket stand and a wealth of rocketry knowledge. He worked all three days and was very involved in the planning. Couldn't have done it without you, Ron. Joe Brooks helped with set up on Friday, a big sacrifice during the week. Doyle Tatum and Jeff Fellman were involved in the planning and spent considerable time in the booth during the weekend. Jeff donated a huge amount of his weekend time to the event and Doyle was there for about 10 hours on Sunday. Richard Levey was behind the booth for quite a while on Sunday as well, sharing his enthusiasm for



(Continued on page 5)



The SoAR Spot is published bi-monthly and can be downloaded in PDF format for reading online or printing. Go to—<http://www.soar571.com>

For up to date club and hobby related material, such as the time and location of the next launch or meeting, keep checking the Website.

<http://www.soar571.com>



Right from the WebSite!

Flying Fields

Don't forget, we are always on the lookout for new fields in and around the Atlanta area. Smaller fields for model rockets or large fields for high power, it doesn't matter. If you know of a field, contact Steve Bellio (sjbellio@hotmail.com) first!

Voluntary Flight Fees

Dear SoAR members,

Due to recent expensive range equipment updates (new Quad Pods and ZRocketwerkZ pads), the need for more improvements and in anticipation of possibly paying for the use of our field in the future, SoAR is beginning a voluntary flight fee program. We had much debate and discussion at the meeting last Saturday regarding the finances of the club. To meet the needs of our members in the future, we feel additional income is necessary. Therefore, we ask that you consider donating a few dollars to the club at every launch. Generous behavior by our club members and the benefit of increased dues (\$30.00 for family and individual memberships effective immediately - this will not affect current members until 2003) will allow SoAR to avoid mandatory flight fees. So please give to your club whenever you fly. And if you have something worthy of being a raffle prize, feel free to donate to that cause as well. Thank you for your understanding and continued support of the best rocket club in the southeast!

Steve Bellio

(Continued from page 4)

rocketry and the club. Thanks guys! Alex MacArther, SoAR's Youth of the Year in 2001, proved why he was deserving of the award by spending many hours each day at the air show. Thanks Alex! Byron Tobin dropped by with his munchkins and spent some time behind the booth and rumor has it that Lee Storesund put in an appearance. Or was that Bigfoot? Last, but certainly not least, I must thank the youngsters that showed up with their fathers and made their own special contribution. Neal (can I drive your car, puuullllleeease?) Shontell, was there all weekend, chatting with folks, helping



tear down and just being a pleasant kid. Andy Bliss proved that he inherited his Dad's gift of gab by chatting with many folks in the crowd and helping when he could. And my adopted nephew, Chris (small) Frye, was there most of the weekend and he helped as well. And his cheerful tease-ability (is that a word) was always fun for me, anyway! Thank boys! Now that it is over, I might even get to build a rocket, or finish painting a couple. Or maybe I'll write an article. What to do? What to do?

Steve Bellio



Stealth demonstration flight on Sunday