



# Chino Valley Flyers



November 30, 2025

NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER

www.chinovalleyflyers.org

*"To create an interest in, further the image of, and promote the hobby/sport of model aviation"*

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## Quote for the Day

*Take Time to be Friendly This is the Road to Happiness*

Unknown



Annual Club Christmas Party:  
Saturday  
December 13th

Chino Valley Senior Center.

## Steve Zingali's UFO Skull



This year's Build & Fly competition had some unique designs, probably one of the most unique was Steve Zingali's UFO shaped like a skull, how appropriate for the October Halloween month. His "Skull" was a tad tail heavy but still flew fairly well giving our spectators quite a Halloween scare!

## Brian Sutton's Old Timer Two-Cell Powered Veivole - "What is it?"



Here's another odd Build & Fly. Hard to tell if Brian's plane is going forward or backward. It's a 1936 Wakefield Veivole originally a free flight model converted to RC. It flew well too!



# President's Column

By Brian Sutton



### Greetings from California.

If you have not heard, I'm out here for a couple of weeks dealing with family business.

This month I want to address safety, we have several new members in the club, including some new flyers. I will remind everyone that safety is everyone's responsibility. Additionally, I'll remind everyone that we all make mistakes. If you see a fellow pilot make a safety related mistake, remind them respectfully of our safety protocols. Even experienced flyers and board members have been known to mess up (your president for example).

Speaking of new flyers, please be aware that frequently we have young pilots and student pilots in our ranks. Please watch your language when youngsters are around.

Finally In remembering Veterans Day, I want to say thank you to all of our veterans who served protecting our freedom.

### Editors Note:

Brian is also celebrating his dad's service in the 394th Bomb Group, 587th Squadron who flew with the 9th Air Force. See you at the field (Hopefully soon!)

Brian



Brian's dad flew with the 394th Bomb Group, 587th Squadron, 9th Air Force.



### Flight Instructors

**Randy Meathrell:**  
Control Line Flying

**Bill Gilbert:**  
Helicopters

**Jeff Moser:**  
Gliders, Multi Rotors

### General Flight Instructors

**Steve Shephard**

**Al Marelo**

**John Ward**

**Shel Liebach**

**Mark Nelissen**

### Club's Board of Officers

President — *Brian Sutton*



Vice President - *Al Marelo*



Treasurer — *Don Crowe*



Secretary — *Jean Grear*



Safety Officer — *Adam Sanders*



Special Events Coordinator — *Mark Lipp*



At Large Member — *Jack Bugaren*



At Large Member — *Robert Fish*



At Large Member — *Jeff Moser*



Chief Flight Instructor—  
*Steve Shephard*



Newsletter Editor — *Bob Shanks*  
Also at Large member



## WHAT AIRCRAFT COCKPIT IS THIS?



See Page Nine



## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

### Chino Valley Flyers Events for 2026



⇒ Event Schedule for 2026 to be established in January by the Board.



**Fly Safe Members**

## **SAFETY SHOULD ALWAYS BE OUR NUMBER ONE PRIORITY**

### *Safety Review for the Upcoming New Flying Year*

*By Bob Shanks, Newsletter Editor*

Our club has had a remarkable safety record over the years, however, as with any RC flying club accidents do happen. However, as we get ready for the new year it is wise for each of us to do a safety review for the upcoming flying year.

We should all be aware of the U.S. implemented remote ID in 2024 for drones over 250g. The Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) does an excellent job of keep all members up to date on all RC-related flying issues. Of course, the traditional safety concerns should all be reviewed.

#### **Traditional Safety Concerns**

- **Battery safety:** Avoid overcharging or completely draining LiPo batteries, and never leave them stored in the aircraft for extended periods. Use fire-proof LiPo safety bags for storage.
- **Flying in unsafe locations:** Do not fly near power lines, trees, or crowded areas. Always be aware of your surroundings.
- **Weather conditions:** Fog, mist, or low clouds can severely limit visibility,

making it difficult to maintain orientation and control. Land your aircraft in these conditions.

- **Flight time and battery monitoring:** Do not push the battery beyond its recommended flight time to avoid a sudden loss of power and a crash. Some drones have a 10–15-minute flight time.
- **Mid-air collisions:** Be aware of other aircraft, including manned aircraft and other drones, and maintain a safe distance.
- **Loss of control:** This can be caused by a loss of command-and-control link, navigation signal loss, or poor situational awareness.
- **Visual line of sight (VLOS):** Unless you have a specific, authorized waiver, you must be able to see your aircraft at all times, even when flying commercially. Use a visual observer: For First-Person View (FPV) flying, a visual observer is mandatory to help maintain situational awareness.

All members should also review their workshop set up and review workshop safety issues. We can also review past issues scanning safety articles written

last year. We should also review the club's posted safety at the field. Our first aid supplies should be assessed as well to insure we have adequate first aid supplies should the need arise.

Please also be aware of new flyers being instructed.

All of these reminders are simply "**common sense**".





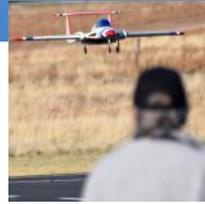
# What's Flying at Our Field These Days?



A fog "rainbow" captured by Paul Gendarme,



Shell Liebach's Thunderbird.



Matt Hinshaw flew his red F-22 foam flyer and his T-28 (far left) as well as his red Pitts below.

Randy Meathrell flew his Arbon Biplane below.



Jeff Moser test flew Rick Nichols glider, Rick launched it below left.





# More Flying Activity at Our Field



Bill Gilbert's large aerobat.



Clint Manchester's and his Thunderbird.



Brian Sutton's very cool Martin B-26 Marauder modeled after the B-26 his dad flew.



Clint Manchester's T-28 pilot is indeed "out of this world."



# What Will it Mean to “Learn” in Artificial Intelligence?

<https://www.whatsinai.com/ai-and-the-future/what-will-it-mean-to-learn-in-a-world-full-of-ai/>

As technology continues to evolve the question becomes what does it mean to “learn” in a world where AI is constantly learning and evolving? Let’s explore this fascinating topic!

## Understanding Learning in Humans

Before diving into the world of Artificial Intelligence (AI) let’s first understand what “learning” means for us as humans. Learning is the process through which we acquire new knowledge or skills. It involves experiences, observations, and sometimes even mistakes. For example, when a child learns to ride a bicycle, they may fall a few times but ultimately develop balance and coordination through practice.

Learning can take many forms: it can be formal, like in school, or informal, like learning to cook from a family member. No matter the method, learning is a fundamental part of being human. It shapes our perspectives, helps us solve problems, and allows us to connect with others.

## The Rise of AI: A New Kind of Learning

Now, let’s shift our focus to artificial intelligence. AI refers to computer systems that can perform tasks that typically require human intelligence. This includes understanding language, recognizing patterns, learning from experience, and even making decisions. One of the most exciting aspects of AI is its ability to learn from vast amounts of data. Traditional learning for humans often requires practice and experience, but AI can analyze countless examples in a fraction of the time. For instance, an AI system designed to recognize images can be trained using thousands of photos. Over time, it learns to identify objects, people, and scenes accurately. This process is known as machine learning, a subset of AI. Machine learning allows computers to improve their performance on tasks as they are exposed to more data. So, while humans learn through experience and reflection, AI learns through data and algorithms.

## What Will Learning Look Like?

As AI continues to evolve, the way we learn will also change. Imagine a future where personalized education is the norm. With AI, educational platforms can adapt to each student’s unique learning style, pacing, and interests. For example, if a student struggles with math, an AI-driven program could provide additional resources and exercises tailored to their specific needs.

This personalized approach to learning makes education more engaging and effective. It empowers students to take control of their learning journey and encourages them to explore subjects that genuinely interest them.

Another exciting possibility is the integration of AI in collaborative learning. Picture a group of students working on a project together, with AI assisting them by providing real-time suggestions and insights. This could lead to richer discussions and more profound understanding, as students learn from both their peers and the AI.

## The Role of AI in Lifelong Learning

In a world full of AI, learning doesn’t stop at school; it becomes a lifelong journey. As the job market evolves due to technological advancements, continuous learning will be essential. AI can facilitate this process by offering tailored training programs just for professionals. For instance, if someone wants to transition into a new career, AI can help identify the skills they need to develop and provide access to relevant courses and resources. This means that learning becomes more accessible and adaptable, allowing individuals to stay current in their fields or even pivot to entirely new ones.

## Ethical Considerations in AI Learning

As we embrace the possibilities of AI in learning, it’s crucial to consider the ethical implications. One major concern is data privacy. AI systems often rely on personal data to learn and improve. Therefore, it’s essential to ensure that this data is collected and used responsibly. Additionally, as AI becomes more integrated into our learning processes, we must address the potential for bias. If the data used to train AI systems is biased, it can lead to unfair outcomes. For example, an AI program used in hiring should be trained on diverse data to avoid perpetuating existing inequalities. By prioritizing ethical considerations, we can ensure that AI serves as a beneficial tool in our learning experiences rather than a hindrance.

## Embracing a Collaborative Future

As we move forward, it’s important to view AI as a collaborator rather than a competitor. AI can enhance our learning experiences, providing us with tools and resources that were previously unimaginable. Or think about the possibilities of using AI to simulate real-world scenarios for training purposes, such as in medicine, engineering, or even environmental science. By embracing this collaborative approach, we can foster a culture of innovation and exploration. We can learn from both AI and each other, creating a more connected and knowledgeable world.

## The Future of Learning

So, what will it mean to “learn” in a world full of AI? It will mean embracing a new era of education where personalized learning, lifelong growth, and ethical considerations come together. It will mean utilizing AI as a powerful ally that enhances our natural curiosity and desire to understand the world around us. In conclusion, as we explore the intersection of AI and learning, we must remain open to the endless possibilities that lie ahead. Learning will mean much more than just being in a classroom.

# The Arizona Territory Red Ghost Legend

<https://nickbrumbywesterns.com/the-red-ghost-of-arizona-territory/>

By *Western Author Nick Brumby*



*“When the rancher went out to examine the dead beast, he found strips of rawhide wound and twisted all over his back, his shoulders, and even under his tail.”*

— *New York Sun, early 1890s*

Courtesy: True West Magazine

For decades after the Civil War a legend terrorized the Arizona Territory. Settlers, cowboys, ranchers and miners alike reported being accosted by a mysterious blood red beast, ridden by a headless human skeleton.

Like countless other legends, this monster would have faded into obscurity – until the day a rancher discovered it was real – and killed it with a single shot.

During the 1880s, a wild menace haunted the Arizona territory. Known as the Red Ghost, and its legend grew as it roamed the land. It was said the ghost was massive, aggressive, and carried the pale white bones of its rider strapped to its back. It was said to stand 30 feet tall. It trampled a woman to death in 1883. One man claimed it disappeared right before his eyes. Another testified that it devoured a

grizzly bear. A cowboy swore it charged his mount, nearly killing them both.

One of the most chilling encounters with the Red Ghost was reported by miners near the Salt River. They claimed to have seen the creature in the dawn light, its blood red body backlit by the rising sun. They described it as an enormous, camel-like beast ridden by a skeletal figure draped in red fur.

The Red Ghost moved so quickly and quietly that it seemed to be a mere apparition, vanishing as quickly as it had appeared.

Another bone-chilling sighting took place a few years later, when a farmer in Phoenix reported finding his orchard trampled and his livestock in a panic. He found large, mysterious hoof prints covering his orchard, unlike those of any known local animal. This incident, like many others, fueled the legend and the fear associated with it.

In 1883, a woman was found trampled to death, leaving clumps of reddish fur on her body and on a nearby bush. Large hoof prints were once again found in the area, but they left locals puzzled as they matched no known beast, wild or domesticated.

A short time later, two miners lay sleeping when a large creature trampled their tent.

Though they could not identify the beast, it once again left large hoof prints and tufts of red hair behind. After several further incidents, locals finally recognized the monster. It was a camel.

In the years before the Civil War, the southwest territory of the United States was expanding rapidly, and there was a great need to haul supplies between remote army outposts.

With a transcontinental railroad still decades away from being built, camels were identified as a possible answer. It was thought that camels could be used to carry at least twice the amount of weight as horses or mules and might also be used in tracking and pursuing native American warriors, as they could travel without water or rest for much longer than horses. It was also suggested that the camels might carry the mail and that fast camel passenger trains might be developed to run from Missouri River points to the Pacific Coast. In 1855 US Secretary of War Jefferson Davis approved a budget of \$30,000 to form an experimental Camel Corps. By 1857 the U.S. Army had purchased and imported 75 camels. The camels were stationed in Camp Verde, in central Texas, where the Army used them as beasts of burden on short supply trips to San Antonio.

However, within a decade, though, all would be sold at auction. The project was originally a success, with the camels carrying two to three times as much as a pack mule. When riding with cavalry units, they easily kept pace with the horses, even while carrying a full load of baggage. However, the Camel Corps experiment was abandoned when it became clear that camels were useless in combat. they were useless in fighting the American way of war.

[Continued on next page.](#)

## Red Ghost Legend (CONTINUED)

As it turned out, camels have trouble breathing while exerting themselves and have a limited lung capacity. They also required a lot more care than horses and mules and didn't really get along with the other animals. To make matters worse, camels aren't as easy-going as domesticated beasts of burden. They spit, vomit and poop at will, even on their handlers. They are also prone to biting passersby when provoked, even if that provocation is routine discipline.

Owners who didn't sell their herds to travelling entertainers or zoos reportedly turned them loose in the desert — giving birth to the legend of the Red Ghost with the legend springing to life in 1883, when two men left their ranch house near Eagle Creek to check on their cattle. While they were out, one of the ranchers' wives heard their dogs loudly barking, followed by a loud scream. She rushed to the window and saw what she described as a "huge, reddish colored beast" ridden by a "devilish-looking creature", and proceeded to lock her front door and wait for the men to come back. When the two men returned they found the other wife had been trampled to death. The men followed the footprints left by the creature the next day and found red hair in a bush. The legend would quickly spread with various tales being told; one described the creature killing and eating a grizzly bear, while another said it disappeared into thin air when chased, but all the tales agreed that the skeleton of a man was on its back.

A cowboy tried to lasso the beast but was knocked to the ground and nearly killed by the monster. Months after the first attacks, a group of miners spotted the Ghost along the Verde River. They opened fire at the creature, and when it fled, something shook loose and landed on the ground. The miners approached the spot where it fell. They saw a human skull lying in the dirt, bits of skin and hair still stuck to bone. Several years later, a rancher near Eagle Creek spotted the monster grazing in his tomato patch. The man grabbed his rifle, then shot and killed the animal with a single shot. The Ghost's reign of terror was over.

It was then confirmed that the beast was a feral, red-haired camel, with leather straps on the side stuck so tight that it was scarred. News spread back to the East Coast, where the New York Sun published a colorful report about the Red Ghost's demise: "When the rancher went out to examine the dead beast, he found strips of rawhide wound and twisted all over his back, his shoulders, and even under his tail." Something, or someone, was once lashed onto the camel.

It remains unknown why a dead man was attached to the back. Despite the camel's demise, the legend of the Red Ghost has only grown over the years. One thing is for sure—being trampled by a blood-red camel in the dead of night with a moldering skeleton tied to its back would have been enough to spook anyone. The strangest part of this story is that it is, at least in part, based on fact. In the late 19th century, wild camels really did roam the West. There was a great need to haul supplies between remote army outposts.

With a transcontinental railroad still decades away from being built, camels were identified as a possible answer. It was thought that camels could be used to carry at least twice the amount of weight as horses or mules and might also be used in tracking and pursuing native American warriors, as they could travel without water or rest for much longer than horses. It was also suggested that the camels might carry the mail and that fast camel passenger trains might be developed to run from Missouri River points to the Pacific Coast. In 1855 US Secretary of War Jefferson Davis approved a budget of \$30,000 to form an experimental Camel Corps. By 1857 the U.S. Army had purchased and imported 75 camels. The camels were stationed in Camp Verde, in central Texas, where the Army used them as beasts of burden on short supply trips to San Antonio. However, within a decade, though, all would be sold at auction.

The project was originally a success, with the camels carrying two to three times as much as a pack mule. When riding with cavalry units, they easily kept pace with the horses, even while carrying a full load of baggage. However, the Camel Corps experiment was abandoned when it became clear that camels were useless in combat. They were useless in fighting the American way of war. As it turned out, camels have trouble breathing while exerting themselves and have a limited lung capacity. They also required a lot more care than horses and mules and didn't really get along with the other animals.

To make matters worse, camels aren't as easy-going as domesticated beasts of burden. They spit, vomit and poop at will, even on their handlers. They are also prone to biting passersby when provoked, even if that provocation is routine discipline. Established transport interests such as the Missouri-based mule lobby soon highlighted these shortcomings, and the Camel Corps' death knell was sounded by the advent of the American Civil War (with many camel supporters, such as Jefferson Davis, joining the Confederacy).

"So they were turned loose to graze and some wandered away," Popular Science reported in 1909. Owners who didn't sell their herds to travelling entertainers or zoos reportedly turned them loose in the desert — giving birth to the legend of the Red Ghost. The legend sprang to life in 1883, when two men left their ranch house near Eagle Creek to check on their cattle. While they were out, one of the ranchers' wives heard their dogs loudly barking, followed by a loud scream. She rushed to the window and saw what she described as a "huge, reddish colored beast" ridden by a "devilish-looking creature", and proceeded to lock her front door and wait for the men to come back. Much later, a rancher near Eagle Creek spotted the monster grazing in his tomato patch. The man grabbed his rifle, then shot and killed the animal with a single shot. It was then confirmed that the beast was a feral, red-haired camel, with leather straps on the side stuck so tight that it was scarred. News spread back to the East Coast, where the New York Sun published a colorful report about the Red Ghost's demise. It remains unknown why a dead man was attached to the back. Despite the camel's demise, the legend of the Red Ghost has only grown over the years. One thing is for sure—being trampled by a blood-red camel in the dead of night with a moldering skeleton tied to its back would have been enough to spook anyone. The strangest part of this story is that it is, at least in part, based on fact. In the late 19th century, wild camels really did roam the West.



# Name the Plane: *F-117 Nighthawk*

[https://www.lockheedmartin.com/content/dam/lockheed-martin/aero/documents/F-117/F117%20Fast%20Facts\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.lockheedmartin.com/content/dam/lockheed-martin/aero/documents/F-117/F117%20Fast%20Facts_FINAL.pdf)

## Editor's Note:

As some of you may know, member **Randy Meathrell** was one of the Aeronautical Engineers developing the F-117. He is a wealth of information. Randy told the editor that the first three XF-117s didn't have infrared sensors so they did not have a large video screen in the middle of the cockpit as shown in the cockpit photo on page 2.

**November 2019 World's First Operational Stealth Aircraft Flew from Holloman AFB in New Mexico to Kuwait with Aerial Refueling Longest Non-Stop Single-Seat Fighter Flight Record F-117A's Produced was Lost in Combat Near-Perfect Combat Record ONLY Aircraft Produced Production Aircraft Developmental Prototypes 59-5 Owned the Skies In Operation Desert Storm.**



- Only Aircraft Allowed to Strike Targets Inside Baghdad's City Limits]
- Flew 1,271 Sorties and Achieved 80% Mission Success Rate Represented Only 2% of all Combat Sorties, but Covered 40% of the Strategic Targets
- Zero Losses and No Battle Damage
- Invaluable in Bringing the Campaign to a Successful End in just 43 Days Changed the Question From "How Many Aircraft are Needed to Take Out a Target?" to "How Many Targets can be Taken Out With a Single Aircraft?"
- The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) awards Lockheed Martin Skunk Works® the contract for Have Blue, the stealth demonstrator that would lead to the F-117A Nighthawk. (April 1976)
- Have Blue takes its first flight over the Nevada skies. (December 1977)
- DARPA awards Lockheed Martin Skunk Works the contract for the F-117 Nighthawk. (November 1978)
- The F-117 takes its first flight piloted by Hal Farley, project pilot. (June 1981)
- The first F-117A unit, the 4450th Tactical Group (renamed the 37th Tactical Fighter Wing in October 1989), achieves initial operational capability. (October 1983)
- The F-117 is used in combat for the first time in Operation Just Cause when F-117s from the 37th TFW attack military targets in Panama. (December 1989)
- The program is awarded the Collier Trophy for "The Greatest Achievement in Aeronautics and Astronautics in America." (1989)
- The F-117 Nighthawk makes its first formal public appearance at Nellis AFB in Nevada which is attended by thousands. (April 1990)
- The USAF officially retires the F-117 Nighthawk with a special flyover ceremony at Holloman AFB. (April 2008) Operational Missions Specs Length: 65 ft 11 in (20.09 m) Wingspan: 43 ft 4 in (13.21 m) Max Takeoff Weight: 52,500 lb (23,814 kg) Power Plant: Two General Electric F404 engines.



# A Forgotten Jet: The British Sea Vixen

<https://www.thunder-and-lightnings.co.uk/seavixen/history.php>

After proving to themselves that carrier operations were feasible for jet aircraft with the Havilland Sea Vampire, the Navy formulated a specification for a fleet defence fighter. The RAF issued a similar requirement, and de Havilland decided the requirements were so similar that a single aircraft could fulfil them both.

While Gloster aircraft produced the GA.5 (later to become the Javelin), de Havilland produced the DH.110. The RAF were edging towards the Gloster aircraft but as an insurance, five DH.110s were contracted for, plus four for the Royal Navy. These four were quickly cancelled when the Navy decided that a simpler and cheaper option would be an improved version of the Havilland Sea Venom (the standard Sea Venom was shortly to enter service). The five aircraft for the RAF were also reduced; down to two prototypes - the RAF was also looking at simpler and cheaper options. Gloster got their GA.5 into the air first, and with that, RAF interest in the DH.110 ended. However, de Havilland continued working on the prototypes. The first flew on the 26th of September 1951. A year later this was the aircraft that killed John Derry, his observer Tony Richards and 29 airshow-goers at Farnborough when the wing failed and the aircraft came apart during a rolling pull-up maneuver. After that, the remaining prototype was strengthened and redesigned slightly over the course of a year before trials continued.



While the improved Sea Venom project was cancelled, the Navy had a change of mind and decided they were interested in the DH.110 after all. The second prototype, WG240, underwent carrier trials, and the Navy liked what they saw. Significant redesign went into the DH.110 to produce the DH.110 Mk.20X; a prototype for a production version that would be designated the FAW.20. Ten development aircraft were ordered in 1955, the first of which was the Mk.20X - a rush job with incomplete carrier modifications - e.g. no folding wings. This aircraft first flew on the 20th of June 1955. Trials with this aircraft went so well a further 35 airframes were ordered. At the time the forces had a standardized mark number scheme that gave naval variants of aircraft mark numbers from 20 upwards, so these early Sea Vixens were actually FAW.20s, not FAW.1s. The first full FAW.20 flew on the 20th of March 1957. While the initial specification had called for four Aden cannon as well as four Firestreak missiles, the decision was taken to remove the guns; following fashion no doubt. Unguided air-to-air rockets were fitted instead, in pop-out boxes. In November of 1957 the first FAW.1 (now that the numbering scheme had changed to number naval variants starting at 1) was delivered to 700 squadron, which formed a trials unit (700Y) and tested eight FAW.1s until the unit was re-commissioned as 892 squadron.

The twin-boom arrangement gives a strong hint as to its Venom and Vampire ancestry; a layout the Navy was well used to operating in the guise of the Sea Vampire and Sea Venom. The side-by-side seating of the Sea Venom was kept on in an unusual form; the observer nestled in the fuselage below and to the right of the pilot. The observer's cockpit was known as the coalhole because of the almost total lack of a view out of it, and it was not a popular arrangement.

At the time, the FAW.1 was a very modern aircraft, matching nearly any possible enemy. There was considerable interest from other countries, including NATO allies and Australia and de Havilland even had an improved Mach 1.4+ version with thin wings on the drawing board but when the British government went loopy and decided that manned aircraft were obsolete (in the 1957 Defence White Paper), interest evaporated. The supersonic version had been cancelled the year before. Meanwhile de Havilland worked on improvements to the design; a variant with increased fuel in wing tip tanks and an extended forward fuselage never got off the drawing board, but the idea of increasing the fuel load would later bear fruit.

As a weapon of war the Sea Vixen was a mixed bag - it was a powerful and relatively quick (just supersonic) interceptor, but her missiles - particularly in early years - meant stern attacks were required on most targets (the expected hordes of Soviet bombers descending en-masse to take on the carrier group).



The observer had the tricky job of steering the radar and using his twin radar screens to figure out where the target was and direct the pilot to follow a course leading to interception. The radar's 'look down' performance was non-existent, so the aircraft had to be flying lower than the intended target - tricky if the target was coming in at low level, hugging the deck! The type's secondary task of ground attack swapped the crew's roles somewhat, with the pilot now handling much of the work and the observer reduced to calling out speed and altitude - particularly in dive attacks, when the pilot's attention was on the gunsight.

## The Massive Red Cloud\*

A Short Story by Bob Shanks

Alex was a key member his small farming community. He was also a rather outspoken guy and had some very narrow dogmatic views of life. He was fascinated by the night sky and spent many evenings sitting behind his telescope observing the heavens. He lived alone after his wife had suddenly passed. The unbearable pain of her loss was eased somewhat as he studied the stars each night and he remembered the wonderful old times with his wife when he first got his farm. She loved viewing the constellation Orion especially. So, Alex had a very soft spot in his heart for that special star cluster.

One blustery evening he was braving the cold crystal-clear Nebraska winter air again studying the Orion Constellation. He was trying to visualize what it must have been like living in those ancient Greek times and wondering about the heavens. He was sipping on a hot cup of coffee and eating his left-over cold chili supper.



Suddenly, a massive red cloud began to descend on his farm. At first he thought it must be a storm moving in, the Nebraska prairie thunderstorms often came up suddenly, however, the weather forecast for the next week was clear skies and cold weather. The clear winter sky disappeared as the cloud enveloped Alex and his farm. He was momentarily stunned at the sudden weather change. At about the same time he heard a strange hum. His farm was on the border with the Nebraska sand hills and there were a lot of old stories from the local Pawnee Indians about strange beings, one was about a giant raptor called Hu-huk. There were also stories of a strange bird the pioneers who came through Nebraska had handed down. There were even ruts left in the prairie where the wagon trains came through the prairie on the way west. The Murdock wagon ruts near Alda, Nebraska are well known. The native Pawnee Indian tribes often told of the giant Raptor called Hu-huk that would terrorize local farmers so was this hum and red cloud related to those stories or was his imagination running wild?

It was disconcerting and worrisome as the hum seemed to get worse during the night. The red cloud was not part of The sunset either. Alex was getting concerned so he called his neighbor Levi. Levi was also worried as was his wife, she was getting upset as the hum was intensifying and painful to her sensitive hearing.

About as suddenly as the cloud descended and the annoying hum started; it stopped. The sudden quietness was in itself almost as bad as the hum. Alex was terrified and for a moment didn't know what to do if anything.

About the time the hum stopped there was a blood curdling screech as a large birdlike creature swooped down over Alex and then suddenly disappeared in the low hanging red mist. As the creature disappeared the sky suddenly cleared as the rising sun slowly warmed up the cold Nebraska air.



Wagon wheel ruts still visible today.

\* Short story taken from Bob Shanks' book: *"Unraveling the Mysteries of Time, Space and The Unexplained."*