

"Moon Over the Pacific."

The photograph was taken in the late 70's on a mid-winter flight from Okinawa to the states for delivery of an RF-4C to a periodic maintenance facility in California.

The aircrew was from xxxx AFB, Texas and was routinely treated to this good deal TDY. The formation consisted of one KC-135 tanker and two RF-4C's from the xxxx "Recce" outfit.

Sometime after the fifth or sixth in-flight refueling, the normal boredom began to set in and to keep occupied the Phantom crews talked to the crewmembers of the tanker aircraft on the radio just to chit-chat. During the conversation it was revealed that the tanker had some additional passengers on board, which included a flight nurse that was catching a hop back to the states. The nurse was then invited onto the flight deck, and talked to the crews of the F-4s and instantly became quite good friends with the pilot of #xxxx.

It was during the next refueling, when after #xxx had "hooked-up" and began taking fuel, that the boom operator suddenly went out of view, and was replaced by a totally naked flight nurse, that then pressed her breasts against the refueling window. The pilot of #xxx almost had an emergency "break-away," but hung in there and took the full off-load.

Following this flashing, the crew of #xxx decided to retaliate and took a high position on the tanker's left wing. Since it was a winter flight, the crew was also required to wear the famous "poopy suit," or anti-exposure flight suit in addition to the normal clothing. Luckily the pilot had first pinned the ejection seat before he began to undress. Anyone that has ever flown the Phantom will appreciate the degree of difficulty in performing this maneuver.

First the leg restraints had to be released, then the torso harness was unbuckled from the parachute, along with the seat pack and lap belt. Next, off came the winter flight jacket, the flight suit and gloves, then the poopy suit, the thermal underwear and so forth. Then he had to stand on his head.

The picture was taken by the pilot of the other F-4, and the timing was right after General Creech (Tactical Air Command Commander) had issued his "Doctrine on Aircrew Discipline" which included more rules about not carrying a camera in the cockpit. The photograph became an instant success within the crew-dog underworld, and late in 1979, when xxxx's Wing Commander was fired for having lost so many crews and jets during a Red Flag, this photo was at the last minute inserted into his going away picture, signed by all of the wing's crew members.

This Colonel was well liked by all, and to repay our kindness for having given him this moon shot, he emptied his lawn mower's supply of gasoline into his on-base back yard, and spelled the F___ word in large enough letters that everyone could see it from the traffic pattern.

The pilot of #xxx, was never admonished for this incident, but was later in trouble for having sonic boomed his hometown on a cross-country. He was then selected for an assignment to the first F-16 squadron and disappeared.

The pilot that took the picture, a Flight Commander at the time, was recalled by SAC and flew B-52's until he retired. He is now a Captain with American Airlines. The back-seaters were rified a few years after the photo and also disappeared. And now you know the rest of this story.

The nurse, by the way, loved the gesture and met the pilot of #xxx that night at the O'Club, but that's another story.

Experience is directly proportional to the amount of equipment ruined.

