A4 vs A7 Comments and link to article

From: Jim Kuzmick

 The A-4 vs. A-7 article was fairly balanced, though I never experienced any departure problems in the A-7 at either high or low speed, even while doing SAM breaks carrying a heavy bomb load.  It’s true that the A-4 was more responsive and fun to fly (esp. the M), but the A-7 had great range, could carry a heavy payload, had great avionics (E model) and was much roomier.  Both airplanes could also take hits well – I was able to return to the ship with both AAA and SAM fragment damage that was fairly significant.  I flew over 200 combat sorties both day and night including both Linebacker II (Alfa strikes), armed recce and CAS.  The A-7E had an empty weight of 21,000 and max gross of 42,000 lbs.  Typically carried 10,200# internal fuel, and either 12 (or 14) Mk 82’s, or 9 Mk 83’s or 4 Mk 84’s, plus 1,000 rounds of 20mm (which didn’t last long at 6,000 rds/min or 100 rds/sec).  But even with all of that, a typical combat mission was a 2.5 or 2.6 with no external tanks or aerial refueling.

 But it was indeed a dog with any of those loadouts – climbout was 250 to 300 kts max with around 1,000 fpm rate, and you maxed out around 25K feet.  On run in we slowly descended to get to 400 or 450 at roll in around 10-12K, with release around 3-6K depending on target defenses.  The HUD and GPS/INS bombing systems were quite accurate (about 6 mil dispersion in combat).   You could do one SAM break without jettisoning ordnance, but you’d lose at least 6K ft in the process.  Once you got rid of everything the A-7 was actually pretty fast, about 620 KIAS max, but still not nearly as maneuverable as a Scooter.  The author was right on about being way back on the power during a carrier approach, so it didn’t behoove you to get slow.  The TA-4 was much easier around the ship, and I’d think an A-4M would have been great.

 I was just happy to get back sheep and trap each time – especially at night! Link below to article:

https://theaviationgeekclub.com/former-us-naval-aviator-provides-an-a-4-vs-a-7-technical-comparison/

Oh to be young and skinny…

