“Spook”

So what’s the story behind the “Spook”? : According to the WARBIRD DIGEST, “The Spook”, was created by McDonnell Douglas technical artist, Anthony “Tony” Wong, for shoulder patches. The name “Spook” was coined by the crews of either the 12th Tactical Fighter Wing or the 4453rd Combat Crew Training Wing at MacDill AFB. The figure is ubiquitous, appearing on every imaginable item associated with the F-4. The Spook has followed the Phantom around the world adopting local fashions; for example, the British adaptation of the U.S. “Phantom Man”is a Spook that sometimes wears a bowler hat and smokes a pipe.

Aircrews embraced the Spook because it reflected many attributes of the Phantom. It could sneak up on the enemy by flying low and fast or come in from high altitude out of the sun. Tennis shoes are often shown on the spook to show its speed and it meant death to those who opposed it. As stated above, the images has been modified by various units and countries to reflect their mission and culture. A few examples have been included on this plaque.

The drawings to the left were sketched by Colonel Robin Olds in 1967 at the Red River Valley Pilots & Tactics meeting held at Korat Air Base in South Viet Nam. Robin Olds was a fighter pilot with more than 16 enemy kills during WWII and Viet Nam. He was the fighter pilot’s fight pilot and preferred being in the action to sitting behind a desk. He retired as a Brigadier General in 1973.