



TRAILING WIRE

TACAMO HERITAGE Collection

“On the Road Again... Collecting TACAMO Artifacts



Mike and Cheryl Vos began the road trip in Seattle, Washington and ended in Patuxent River. Patuxent River Museum is the first to accept TACAMO related mission displays. Future museums are being researched by Dennis “Coach” Warren, TCVA’s Director of Historic Preservation.

- **Mission:** To move TACAMO mission related artifacts, dropping some in Oklahoma City and some in Patuxent River for displays in Museums.
- **Route:** Seattle, Bend OR, Reno, Laughlin, Prescott Valley, Tucson, Albuquerque, OKC, Dallas, Memphis, Cincinnati, Patuxent River, and return to OKC
- **Timing:** Start - May 21st & End - June 5th
- **Miles** traveled: 6053
- **Artifacts:** In Seattle, Flight jacket, Nav bag, log book and weight and balance chart from Gary Breeden, framed photo of the first and last 707 built by Boeing from Coach Warren, and in Tucson a collection of

artifacts picked from the TACAMO Hercs in the Boneyard Safari including a hero refrigerator and convection oven.

- **Thank You’s** go to Coach Warren for the trailer to haul artifacts, Elly Vos donating her car to haul artifacts, Monte Thiese for storing the artifacts in his trailer in Tucson, Don Hutcherson for storing the artifacts in MD, Coach Warren for storing wing pod in OKC, Mike Davidson and Jim Meppelink for cash for gas, Nicole Norfleet for discount hotel stays, Teri and Rod & Don and Jong Hutcherson for hosting us in your home.

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Mission Statement

The purpose of the Association is to provide fraternal, social and recreational activities for the members and guests and encourage and support the preservation of the history of TACAMO.

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- Facebook: www.facebook.com/tacamo.community
- Pinterest: www.pinterest.com/tcva/

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From the Executive Director,

2015 has started with some very busy six months for TCVA. We introduced what we call "Deployments" to our repertoire of events. Deployments are mini-reunions with a particular mission, beyond the fun and camaraderie of a reunion. Detailed photos and details about each are included in this edition of the Trailing Wire.

We began with our "Boneyard Safari". Initially, Vern and I planned a simple 'Bucket List' trip to a private aircraft junkyard in Tucson. Rayburn Brooks turned us on to it, last December. Once there, it was easy to see that it would be of great interest to our membership and got our planning props spinning. There were TACAMO artifacts to obtain for the museums and provide a bucket list adventure for TACAMO members.

Next up, was the Destin Deployment organized by Jim Gallagher. A couple of days on the beach with a finale at the Pensacola Naval Aviation Museum. Good friends and food were the centerpiece in Destin. It all culminated in a 'prop dressing' ceremony at the Pensacola Naval Aviation Museum. The "Crew", in attendance, positioned the props of an old TACAMO warbird 151891 in our traditional + orientation, requested by our old friend of late Don Lindemann and honoring our other fallen shipmates.

Then, Cheryl and I went, "On the Road Again". Our mission was to transport the artifacts harvested in Tucson to the Pax River Naval Aviation Museum and OKC for future museums, for an eventual TACAMO exhibit. What an odyssey. Over 6,000 miles in about 3 weeks. Fantastic scenery and visits with TACAMO shipmates, along the way, made it a terrific adventure.

Our odyssey ended at NAS OKC where VQ-3 hosted a memorial service for Crew 4 on the 38th anniversary of its crash, off of Wake Island. Three of the 16 families were represented. It was a solemn remembrance of our shipmates that are "Always Deployed" and a reminder of the fragility of life when performing a dangerous mission.

Our mission continues as we push forward to place a monument in the "Punchbowl" Cemetery on Oahu, dedicated to Crew 4 and all of TACAMO. We have work to do, preparing an exhibit for the Patuxent River Naval Aviation Museum. We're trying to create a legacy of how and why TACAMO was and is so significant to our strategic defense. And in true Sailor form, trying to have fun doing it.

I'd like to give BZ's to all who have participated in our deployments and contributed to our missions and invite everyone to be a part of our future endeavors. Get your seabag packed for the 2016 reunion in Hawaii. We're all gonna get lei'd ...





TUCSON “BONEYARD SAFARI DEPLOYMENT”



In April, 53 attendees went on a bucket list tour of seven TACAMO Herc at the Boneyard Safari. Everyone climbed, crawled and reminisced about their experiences in the Hercs.

On Friday, the Meet and Greet brought many friends together for the first time in many years. Early on Saturday, after a briefing by Vern Lochausen, TCVA President, a convoy of cars proceeded to the TACAMO Herc boneyard where everyone was greeted by Ramon Purcell, of Boneyard Safari. As everyone went through the Hercs they gathered



TACAMO mission artifacts for the museums and remembered their time in Hercs. The afternoon ended with touring the Pima Museum. That evening everyone gathered to celebrate Vern's birthday with cake and pizza. On Sunday, everyone gathered for an afternoon luncheon after their morning at the Titan

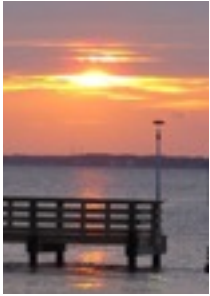


Missil Museum. Vern, TCVA's historian, presented the history of Hercs in TACAMO. Mike Duvall was presented with a TCVA Honorary Life Membership for his role in bringing BUNO 348 to it's final resting place at NAS OKC, Ramon Purcell was made a Honorary TACAMO Sailor for providing TACAMO members to have one last time with their Herc birds and Chiefs in attendance were given recognition by TCVA.



TACAMO DEPLOYMENTS

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Mix Sunrises & Sunsets Over a Beach, Cajun Crawfish & Seafood & Sailors Equal Destin TACAMO Deployment

By Jim Gallagher

Fort Benning Destin Recreation Area was the site for the May TACAMO Deployment. Friends and families descended upon the stunning white beaches of Destin, Florida for a weekend of catching up and sea stories. McGuire's Irish Pub provided a great place for the Friday social hour, dinner and 25-30 years of catching up. Saturday morning welcomed everyone with a truly beautiful sunrise over the waters of the Gulf while relaxing in a lounge chair with friends. After a day of exploring Destin sights, everyone gathered at AJ's Seafood and Oyster Bar. Reggae music filled the air as the sun reflected off the white sand and emerald green waters. Sunday morning welcomed everyone with another beautiful sunrise as chef Phil Gallett prepared a Cajun boil consisting of shrimp, potatoes, corn, andouille sausage and crawfish cooked in a secret Cajun mix. When it was ready to eat a demonstration on the proper way to eat a crawfish was given by Chef Gallett while he told Boudreaux & Thibodeaux jokes. While dining, Blake Hayes, brother-in-law of Larry Hayes entertained everyone with some 70's music. The evening continued with sea stories and adventures since departing TACAMO. A day to remember and cherish forever. Thank you Phil and Blake for your talents that provided a wonderful event.



On Monday, a road trip to NAS Pensacola Air Museum to fulfill the wishes of Don Lindeman, TACAMO Hall of Fame Member who passed in 2013. On many occasions Don and his wife, Roz would visit Pensacola. Don always commented on TACAMO BUNO 156891 (aka...Fat Albert) sitting there with her props "undressed". On one of his last visits with Darrell Tapp and Jim Gallagher, he asked them to please dress those props on 891. Darrell shared this story at the Marietta Reunion with Cheryl and Mike Vos. Just so happened the Vos' met with Brad Hayes, director of NAS Barbers Point Museum. Brad provided the connection for Mike to connect with Steven Granger, aircraft division head for restorations and maintenance of NAS Pensacola Air Museum. Steven worked his magic and made sure all the props were undressed for the ceremony.

A group of 15 gathered on the TARMAC in front of 891. The guys began dressing the props by hoisting a man up. After obtaining the Maintenance cart, reaching the props became easy. Don wasn't there physically but we all know spiritually he was cheering us on. Roz was unable to attend due to an emergency at home.

After the prop dressing ceremony, museum personnel unlocked 891/Fat Albert and all walk through and reminisce the old days. She looked so different without all the racks and equipment in place but you could close your eyes and remember her in her as a TACAMO bird.

This was the end of the Destin Deployment. Everyone took away many new memories and stories.



MISSION COMPLETE

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“On the Road Again... Collecting TACAMO Artifacts

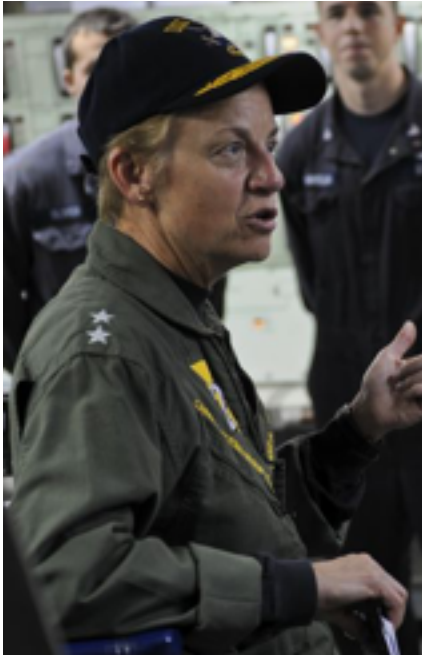
- **Who** they connected while on the mission: Gary & Linda Breeden, Monte Thiesse, Sheila Miner wife of Danny Miner, VQ3 Crew 4, Charlie Gillespie, Allyson Vos, Ramon Purcell, Coach (Dennis) & Cheri Warren, Dave Wahn, Don & Jong Hutchinson, Doug & Mary Scott, Bill & Ashley Lewis, Vern & Colleen Lochausen, Bill & Reba Boyd, Mike Davidson & Vickie, Bill & Phyllis Coyne,



**Patuxent
River
Museum
New
Building**



TACAMO Ladies in Leadership



Nora reported to Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron (VQ4), where she ultimately served three tours at Naval Air Station (NAS) Patuxent River, Maryland, and Tinker Air Force Base, Oklahoma, including one as commanding officer.

Vice Adm. Nora Tyson was nominated to become the next commander of U.S. 3rd Fleet in San Diego, Calif. – and confirmed, she will be the first woman to command a fleet in the Pacific area of responsibility.

Nora has served as the deputy commander of U.S. Fleet Forces Command since 2013, and she temporarily served as commander last fall due to a scheduling problem with change in commands. The three-star earned her wings in 1983 and served three tours with Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron (VQ4), including one as commanding officer. She also commanded the amphibious assault ship USS Bataan (LHD-5), Task Force 73, Logistics Group Western Pacific and Carrier Strike Group 2. Just prior to joining U.S. Fleet Forces, Nora served as vice director of the Joint Staff.

Nora will need Senate confirmation before taking command of Third Fleet. Nora will be the first woman to lead the West Coast fleet, which stretches from the West Coast of the United States to the international date line.

Vice Adm. Jan Tighe became the first female to lead a numbered fleet when she took command of U.S. Fleet Cyber Command/U.S. 10th Fleet in April 2014.

Nora would be the second female to lead a numbered fleet. Adm. Michelle Howard, the first female four-star admiral, also held the title of deputy commander of U.S. Fleet Forces before becoming the first female vice chief of naval operations.

Nora will replace Vice Adm. Kenneth Floyd, who will retire after 35 years in the Navy.

Complete story can be found on the Navy Times website: [timeshttp://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/04/21/nora-tyson-richard-snyder-navy-nomination/26133963/](http://www.navytimes.com/story/military/2015/04/21/nora-tyson-richard-snyder-navy-nomination/26133963/)

Pacific Fleet Commander Adm. Scott Swift announced his selection of Force Master Chief (SW/AW) Susan Whitman as the 17th fleet master chief of Pacific Fleet on Wednesday.

Whitman, currently serving as the senior enlisted sailor at Naval Surface Force Atlantic, is expected to take over the job and the title of fleet master chief in late summer. She will be the first woman to serve as the top enlisted sailor of the Pacific Fleet.

"I chose Master Chief Whitman to be our top enlisted leader from a group of highly qualified candidates," Swift said in the release.

"Her operational experience and inspirational leadership, on and off the waterfront, clearly demonstrates that she is the right leader to ensure our military and civilian workforce, and their families, are well cared for."

A native of Piety Hill, Illinois, Whitman joined the Navy in August 1985. The yeoman's career has taken her to sea duty commands at **Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron 3**, Navy Recruiting District Boston, the submarine tender Holland as well as aircraft carriers Nimitz and Dwight D. Eisenhower.

Selected for command master chief in 2006, she has been the top enlisted sailor on the cruiser Vella Gulf, the carrier Lincoln and the Naval Safety Center before her current tour at SURFLANT.

She is the recipient of the Navy's 2011 CAPT Joy Bright Hancock Leadership Award and the Navy League's Captain Winifred Quick Collins Award for Inspirational Leadership that same year.



Susan Whitman served as a yeoman at Fleet Air Reconnaissance Squadron 3 (VQ4) as her first duty assignment

Prior TACAMO Aircrew Making History



Navy Successfully Tests Aerial Refueling with Unmanned Aircraft X-47B UCAS-D

Above: "Cruising over the Chesapeake Bay, the X-47B — call sign Salty Dog 502 — successfully maneuvered behind an contracted Omega Aerial Refueling Services Boeing 707 tanker and took on more than 4,000 pounds of fuel before heading back to Pax River at about 1:15 P.M. EST on April 22, 2015" (NAVAIR) US Navy Photo

The Navy, Northrup Grumman, Omega Air Refueling Services and many others contributed to the X-47B Unmanned Combat Air System Demonstrator (UCAS-D) program on making Aviation History...Again! Successfully Completing the First Ever Autonomous "probe and drogue" Aerial Refueling Demonstration. The final testing phase started in early March. The crew of Omega's Boeing 707 was composed of two prior TACAMO aircrew of the three person crew, First Officer Dennis Warren and Flight Engineer Ron Kanoff. "The AAR segment of the UCAS-D program is intended to demonstrate technologies, representative systems, and procedures that will enable unmanned systems to safely approach and maneuver around tanker aircraft. We are demonstrating both Navy and Air Force style refueling techniques," said Capt. Jaime Engdahl. The Navy, Air Force, and the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency have been working closely since 2001 to develop technologies and mature operating concepts for AAR, according to Engdahl. (From NAVAIR) "The AAR test was designed to assess the functionality of final X-47B AAR systems and navigation performance, as well as to test the government tanker refueling interface systems. The AAR program is using similar digital messaging, and navigation processes that have been demonstrated by the UCAS-D team aboard the aircraft carrier." (From NAVAIR) The data models that the X47B unmanned aircraft used were developed over the years using a LearJet inflight simulator. Northrup Grumman installed X-47B's navigation, command and control, and vision processor

hardware and software in the LearJet, and the government team installed the government developed Refueling Interface System and Tanker Operator Station on an Omega 707 tanker aircraft. After many months of simulator tests on the data, the test team was finally ready for the X-47B to fly behind the tanker. Over a 48 day final testing phase the test team tweaked the data models and flight envelope of the X-47B. Each stage consisted of a couple of flights followed by days of data updates throughout the test period. In each consecutive stage the X-47B would get closer to the Omega Boeing 707. On April 15th the X-47B successfully engaged the basket three times, and on the final week the X47B took on over 4,000 pounds of fuel on the first approach and engagement on April 22nd. "The X-47B is a tailless, strike fighter-sized unmanned aircraft developed by Northrup Grumman as part of the U.S. Navy's Unmanned Combat Air System (UCAS) Carrier Demonstration program." Aerial Refueling (AAR) unlocks the full potential of what an unmanned surveillance, strike and reconnaissance system can do in support of the Navy. These historical demonstrations solidify the concept of future unmanned aircraft and proved that the X-47B can perform standard missions like aerial refueling and operate seamlessly with manned aircraft as part of the Carrier Air Wing. The X-47B UCAS is designed to help the Navy explore the future of unmanned carrier aviation. The successful flight test program is setting the stage for the development of a more permanent, carrier-based fleet of unmanned aircraft." (From Northrup Grumman)



TACAMO ACTIVE DUTY

TACAMO Gone Fishin'

It was the beginning of another deployment, and the flight was our crew's first wire-out mission. Our flight profile was standard: Take off from Offutt AFB, fly about four hours to the operating area in the Gulf of Mexico, trail the wire out the back of the E-6B for an hour or so, and have a leisurely 3-to-4-hour flight back to Offutt.

When we arrived at the operating area at 20,000 feet the weather was perfect, so I sat this one out and let my 3P and 2P run the mission. Even though I had complete confidence in their abilities, I listened on ICS from the crew-rest area, just in case they ran into any issues. It wasn't long before I noticed an out-of-place silence. Just as I started to think something might be wrong, my flight engineer dropped the bomb.

"We're gonna have to cut it," he called.

I got up to see what had happened. Before I could get to the flight deck, my flight engineer met me on his way back to the reel operator's station, which is located in the back of the airplane. I asked him how bad it was, but all he could do was shake his head. When we got to the reel station there was no question we had a problem. It looked like the wire had jammed up

somewhere, and the reel continued to unspool. It created a bird's nest of messy, mangled and knotted metal wire. We had a lot of wire extended, and with the reel as screwed up as it was, there was no way we could get it back in the aircraft. It was unanimous that we would have to cut it.

As disappointing as it was from an operational standpoint to lose the wire and scrub the remainder of the mission, we weren't too worried. Normally, losing a wire means writing a things-falling-off-aircraft (TFOA) report and a trip back to Tinker to get fixed. The aircraft's reel system is equipped with an automatic and a manual cutter system for situations like this.

I went to the flight deck, jumped in the left seat, and we started running through the checklist to cut the wire. We made a thorough surface sweep with the weather radar for any oil rigs or tankers, found an open area, and told the reel operator to cut it. My 2P, FE and I all stared at the wire indications, expecting to see the length or tension go to zero.

"Reels, flight. What's going on back there?"

Approached Magazine

BY LT KRISTOPHER HODGES of
The Navy & Marines Corps
Aviation Safety Magazine

"Flight, reels. The cutters didn't fire, let me try again ... it's not working, try your panel."

I tried the cutter panel by the pilot's seat — nothing. My 2P tried his panel — nothing.

"Reels, flight. It's not working. Try the T-handle."

The reel operator tried the manual cutter T-handle and, of course, nothing happened.

We were quickly running out of options, but after some discussion, I decided to let the reel operator go "old school" on the wire. This meant he'd use bolt cutters from the tool box — essentially our last resort. Even though our stress levels were starting to rise, we were confident it would work. I was mostly concerned for the reel operator's safety, because we've all seen what happens when tightly stretched wire or rope suddenly snaps. The ends could whip around and seriously injure him or damage the aircraft.

I was on the flight deck when he tried to cut the wire, so I could only imagine the look on his face:

His head turned away, one eye squinted shut, and his face grimaced in anticipation of the force about to be released. He cautiously increased the pressure until the cutters finally snapped closed, and then, nothing. There was no violent sound of wire whipping on metal, no grinding or

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or scraping as the frayed end is pulled by the airstream through the back of the aircraft, just two ends of a newly cut wire laying loosely on the deck, as if they weren't under any tension, which they weren't

"Uh ... flight, reels. Sir, I cut the wire ... it's still attached."

There was a silent pause as we realized the gravity of the situation unfolding around us. We were at 20,000 feet, trailing a lot of wire with a 50-pound drogue at the end of it, and we had no way to get rid of it. At that moment we all went from slightly stressed to, "Houston, we have a problem!"

I glanced at our fuel state. We had plenty of fuel to hang out for a couple hours while we tried to figure this out. I told my 2P and 3P to run bingo numbers for Tinker and Navy Corpus. My FE and I went back to the reel station to see what we were working with. In short, it wasn't good. The reel operator tried to trace the wire back as far aft in the aircraft as he could to find where it had jammed. He determined that it had to be jammed somewhere on the drogue arm itself, external to the aircraft. There was no way to get to it in flight. The only way that wire was going to release was if some external force physically ripped it from the aircraft.

Fortunately, we had fuel, which gave us time to brainstorm. We also had good comms with home base, so I called Tinker on the "bat phone" and passed them our situation. I told them to gather all the pilots, flight engineers (FEs), and reel operators they could find and come up with some bright

ideas. We also needed some options to land away from populated places in case nothing worked.

We thought we could shake the wire loose by deploying the speedbrakes, which produce substantial airframe buffet, or by rapidly rolling back and forth. Another option was to snap it off by inducing negative then rapid positive G's to whip out the jam. The think tank back at Tinker suggested that we repeatedly open and close the drogue-arm doors, which might fray or weaken the wire enough for it to snap. They also suggested either Kingsville or Navy Corpus as possible places to land with the wire out, as the approach to runway 13R at Corpus keeps you over the water for most of the final approach, and the approaches to 31 at Kingsville are over rural areas.

We decided to try the door-cutting method first. We figured if it didn't weaken the wire enough for it to fall off on its own, we could try the other ideas to help it out. As we desperately tried all possible options, with no success, the thought of landing with the wire still attached became more and more real. I started to visualize what would happen as the drogue first hit the ground. Would it stay attached or would it break off? If it broke off, how would it break off? Would it break at the end of the drogue, leaving the wire still attached to the aircraft, or would it break where the wire attaches to the aircraft? The more I thought about it, the more I realized whatever happened was inevitable. The drogue would hit the ground while the aircraft was still airborne, and would cause significant damage to whatever it hit. My focus

shifted to figuring out how we could minimize this damage.

Based on the considerable length of exposed wire and our understanding of how it normally behaves, we calculated the drogue was hanging somewhere between 500 to 800 feet below us, trailing well behind. On a straight-in approach, it would hit a considerable distance short of the runway, just moments before landing. Not the ideal spot.

Then I thought, "I wonder what would happen if we just dragged the wire through the water out here in the ocean?"

There were a lot of unknown variables to this problem, but the one thing we could control was where the drogue would first impact. At first I dismissed this plan as too radical, but the more I thought about it, the more apparent it became that none of our other ideas were going to work; I figured I should at least bring it up to the crew for discussion. The plan was received better than I expected. The fact that there weren't really any other options probably had something to do with that. We discussed all of the possible hazards with this "trolling" maneuver. I'm talking about operational risk management (ORM) like you read about.

What if the wire didn't break off? What if the drogue broke off, but the wire didn't? What if the force from the wire damaged part of the airframe? What might that damage be? How might that affect our flight controls? Don't forget that we'd be flying a heavy 707 only 500 feet over the water. Not that it would be impossible, but the E-6 wasn't exactly designed to do low levels. I brought up this idea to the think tank at Tinker to see what they thought. It took them a little while, but they called us back and agreed that it was a viable option and definitely worth considering. We were getting to the point where if we didn't do something soon we would start burning through our divert

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TACAMO QUESTIONNAIRE

• What influenced your decision to join the military? • What was your service career path? • Of the medals, awards and qualification badges or devices you received, what is the most meaningful to you and why? • Did you participate in combat operations? If so, could you describe those which were significant? • Which, of the TACAMO Squadrons you were assigned to, do you have the fondest memories of and why? • From your entire service career what particular memory stands out? • Which individual person from your TACAMO service stands out as the one who had the biggest impact on you and why? • How has military service influenced the way you have approached your life and career? • In what ways has TCVA helped you maintain a bond with your service and those you served with?

Submitted by Jim A Orsini DDS COL(ret) USA

Honestly, I was inspired by my father and three uncles all first generation Americans telling stories about their service during WWII. Inspiration is one thing but the motivation was provided by the Vietnam Era draft and my father telling me the war looks better from the air. He had served as a Navy Corpsman for three amphibious landings and later on a PBV as a SAR Medic.

I was an Aviation Officer candidate at NAS Pensacola in class 26-69. My class carrier qualified in T-28C in June 1970 and proceeded to NAS Corpus Christi for Multi-engine training finishing in April 1971. I then went to Little Rock Arkansas, my home town, for C-130 transition and then on to NAS Patuxent River and VQ-4 in June of 1971. Three and a half great years later I was released back to the civilian world where I immediately joined the Navy Reserve so I could continue to eat regularly. I was in VP-67 learning to fly the SP2H and later the P3-A and B, all while finishing graduate school and UTenn Dental School. When I finished my Dental degree the Navy said I could no longer fly because dentists, physicians and clergymen are not authorized to be operational pilots. OK, I'm a LCDR with 12 years, I'll be a Dental Officer. No sir, only taking dentists who were dentists on active duty and you were a pilot. So back home in Little Rock now beginning my practice, a National Guard recruiter come by my office with a really great deal and I bit. The 39th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, drinking coffee with boys on Saturday morning, driving around in 4WD vehicles, shooting machine guns and only one weekend a month. What's not to love, I mean a rednecks dream. Until the morning of 12 October 2003, my 57th birthday an NCO calls my office telling me I need to get down to the Armory ASAP and by the way bring ALL of that green gear we have been issuing you for twenty years we will be exchanging it for brown stuff. I spent the next 18 months away from my



office 12 of which were with the First Cavalry Division. We were the follow on force behind the First Armored Division proceeding across the desert through Baghdad and settling in Taji about 30 K north of Bagdad. We were an Infantry Brigade of mostly Arkansas National Guard directly involved in urban combat patrols and civilian aid missions. We had four physicians, one dentist, four PA's and a couple of dozen highly motivated medics operating out of vehicles, tents, buildings and at the very end, a clinic. We had a mission to treat what we could or stabilize and medevac what we could not. Our medical unit treated in the vicinity of fifteen thousand patients that year and had a dozen or so separate mass casualty trauma events including rockets landing in our own sleeping quarters that resulted in thirty of our own being killed or wounded.

I proudly wore my Navy Wings on all of my US Army uniforms and they really look good on the dress blue uniform with a First Cavalry Stetson hat. My most significant award came when BG Ron Chastain pinned a Combat Medic Badge on me, the other doctors and a handful of our medics. This badge is most often awarded to enlisted medics for treating combat wounded while under fire, seldom to ancient Colonels.

My time in VQ-4 is mostly about really good people and trying to figure out where I was going with my life. I knew before I arrived there that I was not going to make the Navy my career but I had no idea what I was going to do. In retrospect, I am sure there were plenty of senior officers that wished I had joined the Army earlier. I had several Aircraft Commanders who were a positive influence on my life but none greater than Ken deGraffenreid. Luckily for me Ken took it personal that someone on his crew was not taking things as seriously as he should and he set about fixing the problem. Thank you Ken and I mean that, I don't know where I would have ended up.

Continued from page 9 - TACAMO Gone Fishin'

options. I made the decision to give our plan a shot. I gave Tinker one last call on the bat phone and told them we were going to try the trolling maneuver.

We decided to fly it like a low approach. We would configure full flaps, keep the gear up and slow to approach speed. We set 500 feet as our go-around point whether the wire had hit or not. I also didn't want to be hanging out with the wire in the water for long, so I briefed we would go-around at the first sign of impact no matter what the altitude. We had planned, briefed and prepared the best we could, and the atmosphere on the flight deck was jovial. It was mostly our way to lighten the mood before we attempted to do something that had never been done before.

We continued the descent to 1,000 feet and configured the jet. From 1,000 feet on we took it nice and slow, 100

feet at a time, no more than 100 feet per min. I was completely focused on my airspeed and radio altimeter, my 2P kept scanning outside for ships, and my FE was focused on wire indication for any signs of impact. Meanwhile, the reel operator was at his station watching the wire from the drogue arm camera. At about 700 feet, the GPWS started going off.

"Terrain. Terrain. Pull up!"

Just then the reel operator shouted over ICS, "It's in the water!"

The drogue was too far behind the aircraft for him to see from the camera, but as it started to skim

the surface it made a giant splash, which he could easily see.

"Go around!"

As we advanced the throttles and pitched up to climb away, the extra oomph from the engines was enough to

break the wire right at the end of the drogue arm.

"Flight, reels. It worked, the wire is gone."

We cleaned up the aircraft and started to climb. I took another look at our fuel. Just as we had planned, we were right at our bingo to Tinker. We contacted Houston Center and picked up our IFR clearance to RTB. The relief we felt was indescribable. We were headed home with a good jet when only moments earlier we were faced with what seemed like an impossible situation, which we were almost certain would lead to a mishap.

We landed at Tinker and found where the wire had jammed. It had knotted itself on the end of the drogue arm. It would have been impossible to remove it in any other way than the way we did.

LT HODGES FLIES WITH VQ-4.

Submitted by Charlie Merz

VR-1 TACAMO component 1/65-7/68

VQ-4 Plank owner 7/68-10/69

VQ-4 8/75-11/76



Thank you for the newsletter! Very enjoyable. Brought many memories.

I was in TACAMO when we were attached to VR-21 in Hawaii. (Late 1963-Mid 1965) What is the modern day name for this group? We were not designated as VQ in my memory.

LCDR E. Harlan and LCDR R Carlson were our senior officers. Then there was me, LT D. Blair and LT E McPherson, LT G Bennet and LT R Carlson as the pilots for the group.

We had the privilege to fly aircraft 890 and 891. I was on the round the world trip with 891 and also when its picture was taken over the beach at Honolulu for Lockheed. I have also seen it in the Blue Angel colors.

A big Well Done to all who publish the newsletter. Don Blair, USNR RET

WANTED

- COMM Central
- Drogue
- Power AMP
- Reel
- Herc & E6 Items
- COMM Box
- NATOPS Manuals
- JATO Bottle
- Galley
- Crew Rest Seat
- A Bunk
- Patches & Stickers

TCVA

C/O Coach Warren

1812 Faircloud Drive

Edmond, OK 73034-6510

Join Now

Annual Membership Dues: \$20

Go to: tacamo.org/TCVA/join.html

TACAMO DEPLOYMENTS

VQ3 Crew 4 Memorial Ceremony Day



Top: Group photo of Crew 4 Families of RMC Aubrey Russell, AT3 Dennis Mura, and AN Andrew Barker

Left at Top: Commander Adam Hancock, VQ3 Commanding Officer cuts the ribbon on the new VQ3 Crew 4 Hall.

Left at Bottom: Immediate family members present, each received a bottle of sand collected from the end of Runway 10 from Wake Island.

Right: Top refurbish model plane (176), below it glass block of sand collected from the end of Runway 10 from Wake Island & letter of authenticity, also memorabilia left by Crew 4 family members.



Fallen Shipmates

Passings received after last Newsletter

I FLEW

by *Brad Baker*

When the last checklist's run and the bag drag is done,
I'll reminisce on the days I once knew,

I won't remember the oh-three-hundred alerts,
But only that I flew!

I will not remember the crew rest in tents,
Nor recall how cold Arctic winds blew,
And I'll try not to remember the times I got sick,
But only that I flew!

I will never forget when nature became angry,
To challenge my intrepid crew,
I'll always remember the fear I felt,
And the pride in knowing I flew.

I'll remember the sights my mortal eyes saw,
All colored in multiple hues,
Those beautiful lights on cold winter nights,
Seen only by those who flew.

God was extremely good to me,
He let me touch his face,
He saw my crew through war and peace,
And blessed us with His grace.



**A SALUTE TO ALL
OF OUR VETERANS**

So when I stand at St. Peter's Gate,
And tell him that I'm new,
I know he'll smile and welcome me,
Because he knows
I FLEW!

Jeffrey Paul Alcott, Sr.	VQ-3's Command Master Chief.	March 27, 2015
Robert Stanley Skalsky	VQ4	April 2, 2015
Lance Marshall Scott	VQ4	April 13, 2015
Howard "Izzy" Gantz	VQ3	April 24, 2015
Paul L. Collins Jr.	2013 TACAMO Hall of Fame Inductee as Industry Partner Monday	June 23, 2015

**June 21
TACAMO
MEMORIAL DAY**



TACAMO 2016 REUNION

Hale
Koa
Prices

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Here



2015 Single/Double Occupancy Rates Per Night Effective June 1, 2015

RATES CATEGORIES	I Leave/Pass	II Leave/Pass	III Leave/Pass	IV Official Travel
Active, Retired, Reserve & NG				
ENLISTED RANK	E1-E6	E7-E9	CN4-CN5 O4-O10	All Grades TDY/PCST/A
OFFICER RANK		WO1-WO3 O1-O3		
DoD CIVILIANS			DoD Contractors	
OTHERS		Widows/ 100% GAF		Foreign Military
Standard	\$91	\$113	\$118	\$177
Moderate	\$99	\$123	\$130	\$182
Garden View	\$106	\$130	\$136	\$187
Partial Ocean View	\$114	\$140	\$147	\$192
Ocean View	\$125	\$154	\$162	\$212
Ocean Front	\$196	\$196	\$196	\$257
Deluxe Ocean Front	\$222	\$222	\$222	\$289



HALE KOA
HOTEL

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RESERVATION**

Mark Your Calendar

8/31/15
Begin Reserving
your stay at the
Hale Koa
for the 2016 Reunion

2016 TACAMO REUNION
IN OAHU, HAWAII

Checkin 8/31 - Checkout 9/8

"Website Coming Soon"



**"SALUTE TO
THE SPOUSES"**

