

# Bernie's Air Stories

By Captain Bernard A. Hoyland USCG Ret (Aviator 714)

*“For those born after I ended my flying career in 1975, welcome to the old timers’ world of round engines and boat hulls, where piloting was as much art as skill, and good airmanship was indispensable.”*

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(with changes as the spirit moves me, the latest being 09-21 -2014)

## Prelude.

Peggy asked me to write down my air stories. The older I get the lazier I get (not to mention crankier), so it didn't seem very likely that I would get around to it. Then daughter Karen gave me a book filled with blank pages to write down interesting experiences. I was nabbed. I imagine that by the time my grandchildren reach forty, they won't remember anything about me except that I had a weird sense of humor and that I was always saying, “**Lord, grant me** Patience...but HURRY! ”. I finally more or less finished ***The Life And Times of Bernard Arnold Hoyland***, subject to periodic additions.

I also needed a briefer (much briefer!) ***Bernie's Air Stories***. Since sloth is divine, I removed seven of eight children from the ***Life and Times*** and only left in the Annette Island family stories because they were unique in the Coast Guard and are gone forever.

If the title above says ***Bernie's Air Stories***, you aviators are in luck -- you have the shorter version. I've avoided drama except where it was unavoidable. Assume that the weather was Coast Guard weather, defined as terrible, and that the omitted hair-raising details were not that different from what you aviators have experienced.

I hope you old timers will not mind too much that I put in the details that my non-aviator grandchildren need to understand the stories. You may even wish to jump right to Air Station Annette where the really good stuff starts.

For those born after I ended my flying career in 1975, welcome to the old timers’ world of round engines and boat hulls, where piloting was as much art as skill, and good airmanship was indispensable.

## Life As An Aviator

I do have some rules, learned in the course of filling five musty old logbooks that detail flight by flight 6,848.6 hours of tedium, terror and high adventure.

- - - Do Not Trust Any Airplane, Or the Weather, or Anything Else. The natural inclination of airplanes in general and weather in particular is to make an aviator look like he has the judgment of a turnip. In addition, an airplane and circumstance can bring any latent ignorance in an aviator glaringly

to the surface. A pilot must actively seek knowledge to avoid the unpleasant necessity for learning from painful experience. Thorough planning is essential for mission success, the pithy version being "proper planning prevents pitiful performance". However, Murphy's Law requires contingency planning ("If a thing can go wrong, it will go wrong, and at the worst possible time"). Suggestion for young aviators in the world of electronic systems: Confine all questions such as "Why is it doing that?" to the simulator.

- - - Controlling Fear is indispensable to air crews. Safe piloting requires the ability to think clearly, to judge correctly and to choose an alternative to a failed course of action. All are indispensable in the fast moving world of flight. Fear will of course manifest itself physically in sweaty hands, accelerated heartbeat, faster breathing, and when the risk is very apparent, in a prickly feeling in the scalp at the back of the neck or a big rocky blob in the pit of the stomach. However, they are a small price to pay for the satisfaction of having rescued someone from death. Not so strangely, I have never heard fear mentioned by aircrews...there is always some euphemism downplaying it, perhaps only a joking reference to "hairy" (raised hairs on the back of the neck).

- - - Good airmanship is the product of study, training and the experience that develops the judgment to choose the course of action that accomplishes the mission with the least risk. We aviators love rules, because unquestioned acceptance of rules enabled us as apprentices to outlive our ignorance. There comes a time however when a light-comes-on and a sense of what good airmanship is all about blossoms. We should then be able to select the least risky course of action that promotes mission success, especially when "between a rock and a hard place", that is, compelled to select which rule to break because it has the least risk. Rules are useful but not sacred, especially when they may terminate one's own very personal life and the lives of one's crew. Rules are for guidance, not a suicide pact.

- - - The eyeball-to eyeball-briefing that I gave before a flight, standing in the cabin to the whole flight crew, was invaluable...that I was the pilot-in-command, what I intended to do and what I wanted them to do during the flight if something interesting happened.

- - - Survival airmanship requires planning for the unexpected and unpleasant event, and the ability to execute the plan at the split-second is required (See Annette stories).

- - - Haste. Cromwell's cavalry conducted all charges at a trot. Do likewise.

- - - In flight, keep your mind on flight. Give earthbound matters a rest.

- - - Once more, anticipate trouble, make a plan to contain the danger, and then practice the actions required by the plan until they are habit...almost instinct.

Finally, you aviators will have more good friends, good times and high adventure than you deserve.

(Enjoy them anyway...they go with the job.)

I must add that the segment of the Coast Guard that crews small boats, mostly MLB's (motor life boats) also face the same challenges and suffer the same disproportionate losses as aircrews, hence a kinship and bond of shared dangers. See the CGAS Astoria section for a short story on MLB's.

## **Flight Training 1955-1957**

**Basic Training.** My first flight as pilot was in a T-34 on 15 December 1955. I soloed in a T-34 on 13 February 1956. Before completing Basic Training I also flew gunnery in the SNJ and flew formation and basic instruments in the T-28B. I had my last flight in Basic Training on 15 August 1956, had logged 176.2 flight hours and flown at Saufley, Baron, and Whiting fields. I had average physical skills, worked hard and made the usual stupid mistakes. In other words, I was about normal.

**Advanced Training.** Peggy and I got government housing at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, Texas, so we actually got to see a lot of our fellow aviators and their families. I flew multi-engine instruments in the SNB, and my flying buddy was Ed Nelson. My first SNB flight was on 1 October 1956, and my last on 14 November 1956 (a whole six weeks). I started flying PBM's the following day. The PBM-5 Martin Mariner was a seaplane, a veteran of World War II (meaning that it was well worn, had obsolete instruments and avionics, but they built strong airplanes in the old days). It had gull wings and a twin tail. The two engines were R 2800s (radial engine, two rows of nine cylinders each, 2800 cubic inch displacement) that produced 2,000 horsepower at takeoff power. I completed sea plane training on 11 February 1957.

I was designated Coast Guard Aviator 714 on 13 Feb 1957, got my wings and was ordered to Coast Guard Air Station San Diego, California. Peggy and I thought we were extremely lucky. We were going to see the **Marine Room** again, not to mention our favorite sea food place, **Anthony's Fish Grotto**.

## **Flying for the Coast Guard: Air Station San Diego 1957-1959**

**Life In Aviation.** Being a search and rescue pilot meant watch standing. I normally had the duty one-in-three, meaning that I worked a forty hour week and stayed on the station every third night, followed by a night off, followed by a standby night at home, followed by the duty. If I had the duty on a Saturday, I got Sunday and Monday off. If I had duty on a Sunday, I got Friday and Saturday off. For reasons not easily comprehended by others, I thought I had a wonderful job: free airplanes and free fuel.

The toughest part about being an aviator for me was the air in the pilots meetings. Every body smoked but me. The air turned blue, my eyes stung, my sinuses went crazy and I never thought to try

to change the condition. After all, real men smoked, just ask anybody with nicotine stained teeth. Be a complainer? Be a wimp? Not a chance. Thank goodness times change.

The other problem with Air Station San Diego was that the previous Exchange Officer was a reserve ensign who made permanent ensign through various small but important errors (in the eyes of the auditor). The Commanding Officer Captain Loren H. Seeger was sick and tired of critical audit reports and wanted an Academy trained engineer who would work like a demon to avoid becoming permanent junior officer. I got the short straw. *Sigh*. I did a cost analysis every month on a mechanical calculator and had to account for any differences between actual sales receipts and predicted sales. That's how I got an ulcer; I was exceedingly motivated.

There was a subtle cultural problem too. I began writing situation reports (abbreviated as "sitreps"), that were informative but terse. Clarity came first but brevity was not far behind. I don't think it ruined my writing style but it sure didn't do it any good.

At San Diego I developed a lifelong interest in decision-aids in general and in maps in particular. One doesn't know what the situation is in a Search and Rescue (SAR) case until its geography is known. The facts that influence the SAR aircraft's use should be readily known: how many miles to the scene, SAR vessels in the area, refueling airports, direction finding stations, radar stations, etc. times xnth. Knowledge promotes good decisions which promote success and safety.

I should mention that a point of nostalgia centers on our HF (high frequency) air-to-ground communications channels. When we flew at night (especially in helicopters where the pilot guarded his own air-ground HF frequency), we could hear other Air Stations working their aircraft on voice 5696 kHz and to a lesser degree on 8984 kHz. For some reason it always warmed my heart to hear our air crews at work and using their often forthright language...it was especially pleasant to recognize a voice: distant, perhaps distorted and probably fading in and out...but familiar.

**Air Operations.** Our CO was CAPT Loren H. Seeger and the first XO was CDR Ben Dameron who was relieved after a year by CDR Walt Curwen. I know that it was not my imagination...the air station was in fact crawling with characters. The most significant were:

No.1: LCDR "Smiling Ed" Kirchner was a delightful grump. I judged any young pilot who didn't know that he was all bark and no bite within a year as mentally deficient and not to be trusted in an airplane.

No. 2: LCDR "Muddy" Waters was the most operationally oriented aviator I've ever met who could also write. He developed Bearing Coincidence and a host of other procedures. His pilot operational written exam was the most comprehensive that I've ever encountered. I also believe that he wrote the Search and Rescue Manual (CG-308). He was head and shoulders above his peers in energy, and for being driven operationally to be an innovator who wrote up his ideas and passed them on.

Socially he was fun but a first class bull-in-the-china-closet. For instance, when he met Peggy and heard that she was from Illinois, he told her that his Grand Daddy had once told him that in the Civil War his GD "shot those Illinois boys down like chickens." Not...so...smooth.

Administratively he also was the OPS Officer who walked into my office at 3 PM and said, "Bernie, you've got the duty tonight . I said, "But I had the duty last night!" His response was, "Well, you'll have the week end off!" Wrong! That normally makes him the winner of The Pits Award (his nick name could have been "Mad Muddy").

He alienated a lot of people but I still vote for him to go to the **Coast Guard Aviator Hall of Fame** for operational excellence. Some of our most eccentric people have been our most creative. He was the best operational thinker that I've met in Coast Guard aviation.

No. 3: LCDR Ken Lundeby was a nice person but he lost all his good points when he was the Senior Duty Officer while I was out flying on a search at the end of the working day. Peggy called the Station when I didn't come home at the usual time. Ken was in the Ops Center, with my name as the pilot of the search aircraft written on the blackboard, and he told Peggy that, gee, he didn't know where I was. Peggy called LT Bill Claborn (our good friend) and asked him what he knew. Bill told her that he was sure I was flying...he made the phone calls and confirmed it for her.

No. 4: LCDR Charlie Macdowell was as pleasant a soul as I knew. I really liked flying with him. His sea evaluations in a PBM were low, slow and down on the deck.

No. 5: Most of the rest: **CAPT Seeger, LCDR Bob Adamson, ADCP (Aviation Chief Mechanic-Pilot) Tom Tate, ADCP John Greathouse, LT Vic Sutton, etc.**

There were some exceptions, such as all those LTs: Bill Russell, Bob Powell (or was he a character?), Paul Breed, Ray Copin, Bill Claborn, and of course Deese Thompson who was for the most part my instructor in UF1G's. I was very appreciative of his help.

Did one have to be a LCDR or higher to be a character?...no, but it helped.

**How was our standardization?** Innocent me, I thought that it was just fine. Years before, while aboard ship and staying at the Station on a week end, I had seen a pilot in his khakis running for the duty helo as the alarm was hooting away, carrying a beer can in his hand. When I got to flight training, I knew that it couldn't have been a beer can, it had to be a soft drink can. Today, sadder but wiser, I'd guess that it was a beer can. We were well trained, but I remember LT Russ Ferrier trying to persuade people that 381.8 MHz (CG UHF Common) should be on the same channel in every aircraft. The fixed wing mix for a time was PBM's, P5M's and UF1G's, all with different avionics (electronic communication and navigation equipment).

Our rescue cases that warranted a scramble started with a blast on the alarm followed by a short public address announcement of the problem: "bailout 60 miles west", "Vessel sinking", etc. The flight crew for the scramble was whoever got there first: The first pilot with a PPC designation (Patrol Plane Commander) got the left seat. Lesser mortals got the right seat (the copilot's seat). A UF1G would launch in four to six minutes in daylight and slightly longer during sleeping hours. The duty officer on the desk passed the VOR (visual omni range) course to the scene and the details of the case when the copilot called with an airborne time. (The radioman had sent a crew list prior to takeoff.)

**Air Stories.** I flew as pilot in command (PIC) of my first Coast Guard aircraft on 3 May 1957. It was

JRB 6469 (the CG version of the SNB) and not much of a multi engine aircraft (a tail wheel airplane with lousy brakes). It was however the only airplane that I was senior enough to fly as the pilot. On all others I was a copilot. I finally got enough flight time to become a first pilot and flew as pilot in command of UF1G 1294 on 8 Oct 1957. My copilot was Walter Larsen (who was the only one junior enough to be my copilot.).

There were those who liked the UF1G, and they have my warm regard for a kind and forgiving heart, considering its single engine performance and its water characteristics (tricky) -- there is some risk that nostalgia has overtaken them. I agree that as an amphibian it was quicker (and much easier on the nerves) to scramble on a Search and Rescue flight flying off from a runway (not going down a ramp in a seaplane and removing the side mounts, doing power checks while turning in a circle, and taking off down the San Diego channel at night dodging underway destroyers, other ships, and the ships moored near the channel including the submarine tender, etc...way too exhilarating).

Walt was my copilot when I flew as pilot in command of P5M 1318 on 29 July 1958 also. It was his hard luck to be so junior.

On 7 Nov 1958, we were enroute in P5M CGNR 1318 from CGAS San Diego to medically air evacuate an injured fisherman from a fishing vessel in the lee of Socorro Island. I don't know what we weighed but it was a lot. The Pilot in Command was LCDR Jack Tooley, and LT Bill Claborn and I shared copilot and navigator duties. We found the fishing vessel with no trouble, if you ignore 900 miles enroute, because the island is a big radar target. In those days, navigation in that part of the world was dead reckoning on a chart with a little help from homing on the vessel's radio transmissions and from radar.

We did a sea evaluation at the vessel's location and didn't like what we saw so we prudently circled the island looking for a better lee and more protected water. The vessel was in fact at the site of the most protected water. We did another high and low sea evaluation, picked our landing course, dragged the P5M in with full flaps and enough power to just clear the water. Jack saw a "smoother" spot (smoother is only in the eye of the beholder), closed the throttles and reversed the props in mid air and we landed eventfully. *There are no uneventful open sea landings.* We got the patient onboard and loaded four JATO bottles (loading JATO bottles in a sea way is no picnic). I'm guessing that we weighed about 70,000 pounds at takeoff. We got established on a takeoff heading, set full power, fired the bottles and flew home, making a night landing in the seadrome. It was all in a very long day's work, about 12.7 hours of flying time.

On 18 November 1958 I completed my PPC check (Patrol Plane Commander check) in UF1G 1294.

## **Coast Guard Air Detachment, Annette Island, Alaska 1959-1961**

( where the good stuff begins)

**Air Operations.** Alaska is an interesting place. Annette and Ketchikan are in the southeastern part of

the panhandle. The first complete year we were there (1960), it rained 167 inches ...one inch short of 14 feet, according to the weather bureau. Peggy recalls that it would have drowned two elephants, one standing on the other. We had three airfields we used on a routine basis (Annette, Yakutat and Juneau) and dozens of unimproved seadromes with whopping tides, very fast tidal currents ( I've seen buoys with a "rooster tail") and lots of rain, fog, high wind (the windsock most often was straight out with resulting turbulence over the mountains)--and ice! On the wings! The radome! The propellers! The floats! We could haul an amazing amount of ice, and of course we had wing and tail deicers as well as prop deicers. It was here I came to truly respect the Frost King. Ice should be quiet (if disturbing) but not on a UF2G. You ought to hear it crashing when it comes flying off a prop at 2000 RPM and slams into the fuselage next to the radioman. Radiomen in icing conditions were jumpier than the pilots. The terrain reminded me of Norway: high, rocky with lots of fiords. I can still recall the heights of the surrounding peaks such as MT Tamgass, 3600 feet. By the way, I was my own meteorologist for the icing level: if there was snow on MT Tamgass down to the 300' level, that's where the icing started. It was an ungodly place for an aviator. While it was not boring in the air; it was pretty boring on the ground. Our nineteen months there were just one month too long. It was an 18 month tour for married people, 12 months if "unaccompanied" (no family along).

Note: At the Pterodactyl Roost in 2013, I was sitting with a group of friends who were former Annette aviators. Two of them told identical stories of picking up enough ice that it forced them down from their instrument flight plan altitude to 200 feet, navigating with a junior petty officer on the radar giving headings to stay over a water passage. When the ice melted, they climbed to altitude to do it all over again. They also mentioned an aviator who turned in his wings when he had enough of flying in icing and in low visibility and low ceilings. Two aircrews also were lost: HU-16E 7233 on 3 July 1964, and HU-16E 7237 on 15 June 1967

My tour, while very interesting (to say the least) had only moderate icing and was not hairy (*// cannot speak for my copilots however*).

My first CO was CDR Macwhinney, who was relieved by CDR Walt Curwen in the summer of 1960. I thought that both Mac and Walt were the salt of the earth...except for one thing. Walt smoked cigars. All the other pilots thought that the CO was "cool" too, and pretty soon everyone had flight suit pockets bulging with some really nasty cockpit fogggers-and-stinkers. A UF cockpit would turn into "gag city" with the striking of a single match. Opening a window was not an option considering the weather.

**The Alaska Checkout.** Nobody flew as pilot-in-command upon arrival at Annette until he completed the Alaska Checkout, whether a designated aircraft commander or not. It was part operational area checkout (the common landing areas, special areas such as Hollis Pass), operational techniques such as how to handle heavy icing, how to fly over an unimproved seadrome area looking for logs and deadheads, etc). We also used the Ellis Airlines operating manual (a requirement of the FAA) that covered the hazards of the area and how to detect and mitigate them (plus a great deal of practical information about the principal hazard, weather, such as Taku winds off the Taku glacier high above Stephens Passage near Juneau).

**The Alaska Checkout had Rules of Thumb:** 1.The weather is bad a lot of the time so we flew in bad weather 2. Go IFR (Instrument Flight Rules) if possible. 3. Getting lost while VFR in bad weather is

a sad song (dumb-de-dumb-dumb) so everyone who's VFR (Visual Flight Rules defined as one mile visibility and clear of clouds) follows shorelines where ever possible. 4. Follow the shoreline to your right. This separates traffic a bit and if the fjord looks new and strange, a steep turn to the left will lead one to more familiar places. 5. Be ready to land. If all else fails, a prompt landing will lead to some leisurely thinking on the water. 6. Try not to hit any deadheads (logs) while landing or taking off. 7. One more time: Don't get lost.

**The Steep Climb Escape Clause:** Several enterprising officers discovered another means of escape. If one sees, "TREES!" during a search over mountainous terrain with the usual crappy up-and-down weather, one puts on max power, steepens the angle of climb while lowering the air speed, and climbs like a home sick angel to the minimum enroute or to on top of the clouds, whichever occurs first. *Note: Reports say that heartbeat eventually returns to normal, if not on that flight.*

**The Steep Turn Escape Clause:** For low altitude, low visibility maneuvering (steep turns), we would most often had RPM 2300, 15 degrees flaps, electric fuel boost pumps on and rudder boost on. The sequence was roll in aileron while adding power, back yoke and top rudder as the bank steepened past 30 degrees to 45 degrees. *There was normally no increase in heartbeat if done early enough.*

**The UF2G.** We flew UF2G's. The Coast Guard was modifying the UF1G into the UF2G at the Grumman plant. The basic change was to increase the UF1G wingspan from 80' to 96' 8", and to increase the wing area from 883 square feet to 1035 square feet, leading to the nickname "stretch wing". The changes made the airplane handle much better.

In particular the water handling capabilities improved, which were crucial considering our water landing areas with coves and channels surrounded by high terrain that misdirected our strong winds. Taking off "into the wind" could change on the takeoff run. Only "cats paws" on the water ahead would give a hint of possible changes. We sometimes had to takeoff from the water with strong cross winds and at one infamous light, perhaps downwind, because the choice was one-way-out (the other way had a mountain in its path). The Coast Guard version's water takeoff weight limit increased from 29,500 pounds to 32,000 pounds, so we could even haul some cargo to light stations.

Handling in icing conditions was much improved (the new radial de-icing boots were much more efficient than the UF1G's longitudinal boots), as well as improved single engine performance due to improved controllability and reduced induced drag. It was a significantly improved airplane. *Note that there are non-believers, notably two very senior aviators, who recall being forced down by a load of ice, descending using radar to follow a channel such as Stephens Passage. The ice melted off at 200' and they climbed back into the clouds for another icing adventure.*

My impression when flying the UF2G for the first time was that it was hard to force down onto the runway when landing. The UF1G and the UF2G had the same R 1820 engines: one row of radial cylinders, 9 each, 1820 cubic inches of piston displacement, 1425 horsepower at max power (2700 rpm and 51.5 inches of manifold pressure) -- they were not terribly reliable until they were upgraded at overhaul in the middle sixties. *Note that UF2G was changed to HU-16 to coincide with Department of Defense nomenclature in the early sixties.*

**Flying the UF2G Off The Water.** Driving a multi-engine aircraft on land is not good preparation for driving an Albatross on the water. A land aircraft is stable. Except in very high winds, the wings stay level. Taxiing is easily mastered by steering with engines and rudder, but especially with brakes or nose wheel steering, and controlling speed with brakes. The tendency to weathercock in strong winds can be controlled with relative ease.

Taxiing an HU-16 on the water unnerves most land-plane pilots. Eventually as copilots, they become accustomed to fighting the weathercocking, and the wings not being level due to either one float or the other in the water. There of course is no braking; directional control is primarily with differential power, with the propellers in tractor or reverse. If the water entry is via a ramp followed by taxiing out a narrow dredged channel marked with substantial pilings, the pilot will use some precision navigating to not go aground and, in particular, not to hit a piling. While water taxiing in crosswinds, the aircraft is most controllable with the gear down to control speed (and in warm temperatures typical of Gulf waters, with the RPM set near 1400 for engine cooling), especially if the trip down the channel is a long one. Speed control is important with a strong cross wind. Building speed while fighting weathercocking by using lots of power on the upwind engine can drive the downwind float under water. Again, wheels down can help control speed.

An into-the-wind takeoff with 15 degrees flaps and light wind would normally be started with full right aileron (the wings roll to the left due to torque), back yoke to help the plane onto the step, and full right rudder, leading with the left throttle (controlling the engine torque that pushes the nose to the left). The first requirement is directional control on the takeoff roll, so the throttles will go forward with that goal in mind, followed by full throttle when the flight controls are effective. *The new water pilot will spend some time kicking rudders frantically and adjusting throttles; over controlling is normal and expected, if unnerving for the instructor.* With increasing speed and consequently more effective control response, the yoke's back pressure can be eased as the aircraft comes "on the step", followed by liftoff.

The waters in SE Alaska had a special hazard: floating debris in the form of logs that had come loose from great rafts of logs enroute the sawmill in Ketchikan. Some of the logs were "deadheads" that were nearly completely submerged, with some floating vertically with barely any part of the log showing above the water. I can still recall a water takeoff briefing to the copilot, "If you see anything in the water, point at it. I'll miss it."

Landing in a seadrome would normally use 30 or 40 degrees of flaps. If the water is smooth causing depth perception to be marginal, 15 degrees of flaps would permit the nose to be higher. The nose wheel doors should never get wet on a water landing until the aircraft comes off the step. Nothing alarms the instructor in the right seat like the sound of water near the cockpit, most often caused by the student allowing the nose to drop as the aircraft enters ground effect, causing the center-of-lift to move aft, or by decreasing yoke back pressure immediately after touch down. The pilot should maintain the aircraft's nose-up attitude until it is off the step.

The most dangerous smooth-water landings occur in smaller fresh water lakes that can be glassy smooth, where depth perception is so marginal that the landing must be an instrument landing, similar to that done at night, where the flaps are set at 15 degrees, the rate of descent is 200 feet per

minute and the airspeed with standard weight is less than 85 knots, perhaps even 80 knots. Pattern altitude may be 500' AGL, turning final at 300' to 200'. The technique is best practiced in excellent daylight conditions to develop a reliable habit pattern and a feel for the aircraft's handling.

We navigated using sectional charts (scale 1:500,000) and the Tongass National Forest chart (14 miles to 1 Inch) for its abundance of accurate place names.

We may have been the only HU-16 unit in the Coast Guard that had spare wiper blades stashed on unit aircraft because we wore them out and they then broke off at unfortunate times. The next flight would certainly need them wherever we were.

Before we leave the UF2G (HU-16), here's a **Peggy trivia question**: aviators love to play with switches on autos, camcorders, hi-fi s -- the more switches and knobs the better. Why? My answer: The UF2G R1820 engine responded badly to carb air temps (carburetor air temperatures) lower than 20 degrees centigrade, and would backfire with great and alarming vigor when so treated. We learned to jiggle carburetor air door switches to keep the temp at 20 degrees to prevent carburetor icing and, if the truth must be known, as a good luck charm to prevent back fires. In short, "jigglers" are made, not born. *OK...some are born.*

**First Time as Operations Officer.** The Operations Officer LCDR Bill Guillou was getting out of the service in June 1960 so the CO CDR Macwhinney made me OPS Officer in May. We didn't have a training program for either syllabus pilot upgrading or for pilot recurrent training, so I set out to write one based pretty much on the outlines of the Muddy Waters training. In a couple of months we had an outline of training that was useful to the flight scheduling officer LT Bill Boucher.

LT Dave Irons reported for duty that fall. He was standing in the OPS Center one morning and commented that we really ought to have a more complete training manual...about four officers grinned at him...and he asked "why is everybody grinning?!" He hadn't been there when just a few months before there wasn't any training material at all.

**Family Stories.** The five of us flew from Seattle Tacoma airport to Annette Island in July 1959 on a four engine prop aircraft, probably a DC-6. There was no housing available at Annette at this time (and there wasn't for six months...we moved to Annette just before Christmas). We had arranged for an apartment in Ketchikan. After landing at Annette we transferred to an Ellis Airlines Grumman amphibian which made a runway takeoff at Annette and a water landing at Ketchikan. We disembarked at the Ellis float and were met by a very nice older gentleman in a plaid lumber shirt -- we shook hands and exchanged first names. He helped us load our luggage in an old Ford station wagon and drove us to our two bedroom, furnished apartment, number 207 in Wingren Towers.

That weekend we went out for dinner at a restaurant (was it the Narrows?) where we met the nice gentleman again (still in a plaid shirt) who offered to buy us a drink, which was very kind of him. Peggy ordered the cheapest drink she could think of (besides water) and I ordered a beer--we were not going to take advantage of the working poor in Ketchikan, especially the very nice working poor. We were apparently not good judges of affluence. The gentleman was Mr. Wingren who owned the

apartment tower we were living in, Wingren Towers, as well as two super markets.

When we moved from San Diego, we were paying 33 cents for a half gallon of milk at the commissary. In Ketchikan we paid 68 cents a half gallon and \$1.85 for a six pack of Seattle beer. We were shocked. I wrote my parents that we all were going to give up drinking.

**The House and Life Style.** We moved to Annette in December and lived in what had been a World War II warehouse which had been abandoned by the Army and then converted to a transient bachelor quarters by the Federal Aviation Agency. There was no Coast Guard housing, so enterprising Coast Guard Persons converted abandoned buildings into homes. The majority of these were Quonset huts that were famous for their curved walls and were grouped in the "Coast Guard Living Area" which enjoyed the amenity of free movies. Our home was well beyond that area but it was waterfront property. There of course was no TV, and radio was available only during daylight hours (skimpy in the winter).

The first Coast Guard officer who lived there (LCDR Carl Scott) said he hauled a dump truck load of beer cans and bottles from the grounds around the building; the transient bachelors apparently heaved them out the doors and windows. The house was 20 feet wide and 100 feet long with the first 20 feet being garage. The outside walls were vertical and had never been painted, nor had the pitched-but-not-curved corrugated galvanized steel roof. The "lawn" consisted of a few cubic yards of leveled-gravel with two flower boxes that I built to reduce the appearance of an incarnate *Tobacco Road*. We did have a bathtub (the only one on our end of the island), and Peggy would lift the kids up to the window to watch their bath water drain out into the swamp. The commode was on a septic tank; the other drains just found their natural flowage. None of the windows were the same size. Carl had converted the old warehouse/transient quarters/abandoned building into living quarters for his family; he finally "laid the hammer down" when he got the place nicely livable but somewhat short of palatial.

The kitchen was our biggest problem. We could plug in the toaster...or the coffee pot...or the frying pan. More than one blew the circuit breaker. When I redid the kitchen I got a couple of hundred feet of #12 AWG copper wire (and a wiring instruction book) from Sears in Seattle (by air) and we could toast, fry and make coffee with no problem.

The swamp drained through a culvert under the road into Tamgass Bay (Harbor? *Whatever*). During salmon spawning time in late summer, the schools of salmon would come into Tamgass Harbor looking for their spawning stream. They would encounter the thin mix of swamp water from my swamp mixed with Tamgass water and circle in front of my house. When I got home I'd catch salmon until they figured out that swamp water was not their home creek.

I should mention that the garage was the outside play area, complete with swings and tricycle. Outside play was a challenge, between the rain and the fly called a "white sock". It bit a hole in one's skin and fed on the blood. I will say that eldest son Alan (barely five years old) was a hardy Alaskan. I recall him coming in the house one time with blood all over his forehead from white sock bites and no complaints. When it stopped raining and the sun came out, we went on picnics. I do believe I have a photograph of every occasion...and not many photographs.

We did a lot of business with Sears Catalog Sales, and we didn't always get what we wanted when we wanted it. One Christmas I ordered a rocking chair for Peggy. I got an end table. Back it went. That was also the Christmas that the presents for the little ones didn't show up on time...no problem. We just left the decorations up until the presents arrived and let the persons driving by understand that we had a Sears problem.

**Working Uniforms in the Age of Aviation Green:** Our uniforms conformed to the environment. Because there was no paving except on the runways and the ramp, the mud and gravel (combined with the 14 foot of rain in the year 1960) made boon dockers the preferred footwear, except for one exceptional LT (Gene Baumann). We bought washable Forest Service green pants from Sears (with a sewn-in press) and wore them happily to work, along with a khaki long sleeve shirt with black tie, and a brown leather flight jacket. During this time period, that fashion horror, the orange flight suit, also appeared. Every flight could be diverted for some urgent need, and wind up RON-ing (Remaining Over Night) somewhere other than Annette. My RON gear for an emergency deployment was a check book stuffed in the inside pocket of my leather flying jacket (checks were good anywhere in Alaska). The only barred uniform item was a plastic cover to rain-proof a service cap's cloth cap cover. It wasn't the regulations, it was the aesthetics: it looked awful. Back to uniforms and where worn: there may even have been a flight suit in the Bubble Room in Juneau. I have no photographs but I've heard stories...

We were not spiffy nor was our housing...mostly Quonsets except for one person (me) who had waterfront property and a converted warehouse for a home and the several families in Pan Am housing. We had the only bathtub on our end of the island; we loved it.

Spiffy was not always possible in Alaskan restaurants either. Most restaurants had a can of Carnation canned milk sitting on their tables in lieu of regular, hard to get cream. Sometime around the middle sixties that changed to the more conventional small containers.

May I repeat, the uniform conformed to the environment for the ladies too. When there was an all-hands party requiring a high degree of spiffiness (at the Coast Guard's own Muskeg Lounge for instance), the ladies came in rain gear and boots carrying their party shoes: boots off at the door, party shoes on. Rain gear off, party gear displayed.

**My Only Fishing Story.** One weekend I was casting at the aircraft ramp by the old Coast Guard living area (the Quonset hut ghetto) when a visiting aviator wandered over and began to chit-chat. I hooked what felt like a ten pound silver salmon, and my visitor got very excited. I took pity on the poor devil and handed him my rod, "Here, you land him". I got more fun out of watching him fight that fish than I ever would have myself...he really enjoyed it. After he landed it, he wanted to give it to me. I was way too smart to let someone palm a fish off on me that needed to be cleaned so I insisted that he take it. As I recall, he iced it and took it home. In any case, the visitor was Ted Rapalus, who was the Operations Officer at my next Air Station, San Francisco. What does one call "casting bread upon the waters" when it's a fish?

**Baby Richard.** Peggy had gone to Ketchikan as the due date for the baby arrived. The doctor didn't

know when the baby was due but he did give Peggy the barbaric baby inducer of the time, mineral oil. It worked, but not as intended. Finally, the doctor gave up and sent her home. She thanked her hosts Jane and Charlie Clark and returned to Annette. Meanwhile Peggy's mother (Grandma Katherine to the kids) had flown in to help Peggy with the prospective baby because I was awaiting temporary duty orders to Long Beach, California to serve as a Government witness in a Federal case.

On the evening of 10 April 1960 Peggy started having pains. The Coast Guard in Ketchikan tracked down the doctor in a bar/saloon and hauled him in a pitching and rolling 40' patrol boat for the 13 stormy miles to Metlakatla. There he got a rough ride along our gravel roads to our house. By this time he was fairly sober. Peggy made a pot of coffee; everybody but she had some. The doctor tried hard to train the hospital corpsman so that the doctor would not get any more all-expenses-paid-trips at night in 40 footer. The corpsman was absolutely terrified, judging by the way he backed into the bedroom wall and stayed there. The doctor took off his red plaid lumber jack shirt exposing his white T shirt and was now surgically garbed and ready to go to work. Peggy was so quiet that her mother in the next bed room never woke up. The doctor was apparently completely out of practice on putting a surgical clamp on the stump of the umbilical cord so I did it for him.

Bob Mercier flew the doctor, Peggy and Baby Richard to Ketchikan. The ambulance met them at the seaplane ramp and then headed for the hospital with the sirens blaring. Our Coast Guard friends in Wingren Tower heard the siren, guessed it was Peggy, and she had company that afternoon.

I had accompanied Peggy to the hangar intending to come back to the house later and dispose of the pail of after-birth. Kate was a very queasy person. Almost anything could upset her stomach. When I got back to the house I found that Kate had put on my rubber boots, waded out in the muskeg and buried the pail's contents. There were pioneering women in the old days.

Speaking of pioneering women, when it was time for Peggy and Baby Richard to come back to Annette, she checked the two of them out of the hospital. With flowers and luggage in hand she took a taxi to the float where Ellis Airlines planes received passengers. There she bought tickets and flew to Annette. On the way to Annette one of the passengers said that Baby Richard was young to be getting his first ride in an airplane. Peggy enjoyed saying that actually it was his second ride.

**Four Favorite Annette Air Stories** There are lots of interesting stories I could tell such as a few trips through Hollis Pass, some landings at Five Fingers Light, a clear icing experience and a couple of really rough-air stories, but here are my favorites. I also have some stories Peggy and I heard from CDR Walt Curwen when he visited San Francisco the summer of 1961...they can wait till some other time when you might ply me with food and drink.

**No. 1** On the afternoon of 7 March 1960 I took off from Annette in UF2G 1260 with Dick Laskey as copilot, AL1 Joe Jellison as radioman and a new AD3 fresh out of school, John Reilly. Dick was in the left seat for takeoff. Weather was a precipitation ceiling of 600 feet, visibility varying from 2 miles to 4 miles in snow. After takeoff Dick raised the gear and several things happened: the red gear warning light stayed on, the hydraulically operated windshield wipers quit (bummer!), and the nose wheel

showed a barber pole on the gear indicator, while the main mounts indicated up. With the nose wheel up, we could land in lots of seadromes and work on the problem at our leisure, so we tried to raise the nose gear with the emergency hydraulic system. It didn't work. It now looked like we would be fooling around with this for a while so I relieved Dick in the pilot's seat (left seat) on the theory that I was the best person to keep us from making a big splash from flying into a hill, tree or mountain.

I set up a race track pattern at 400' with the visibility up and down in snow showers, mostly down. The other crew members wrestled with the problem and received frequent and lengthy advice from the Commanding Officer and the engineering officer and all their friends and companions on UHF 381.8 MHz.

The sun set at 1834. I was not thrilled at the prospect of flying around in the snow in the dark at 400' or less with no windshield wipers. The crew had gotten the main mounts out and locked by hacking holes in the sides of the airplane and pushing them out with an oar from the abandon ship life raft. They were so diligent that it took 500 man hours to repair the hull. One must face the fact that they were very motivated. The nose wheel was a conundrum we never solved even though they about wore that oar out. We landed at 1855 with no flaps and every body except Dick and me all the way in the rear of the airplane. There was still some light (darn little!) so we used landing lights to help out. At about 50 knots the nose slowly lowered and we started grinding the nose wheel doors. When we stopped, I shut down the engines and electrical systems and said, "Abandon the aircraft!" (I think that's written down someplace). Dick in a burst of enthusiasm appropriate for a LTJG popped the overhead hatch, climbed on the seat and was going to drop 12' to the ground to break numerous parts of his anatomy on the hard runway. A wiser head prevailed (or so I thought). I grabbed him by the pants and thought that I had made him go aft and use the ladder. Not a chance.

This was probably the best supervised accident in the Coast Guard. We had talked for four hours to the brains of the Air Detachment. Nevertheless my log book entry still reads, "Unable to fully lower nose wheel due faulty selector valve plus failure hydraulic line. Landed main gear extended. Nose gear collapsed on roll out. Incident. Material factor. Maintenance factor. Weather factor. Limited pilot factor." When I walked into my Annette palace (Honest! It was a palace. It just looked like a dump from the outside), nobody had told Peggy a thing seeing that she was eight months pregnant with Richard, so I got to tell her the whole story. By the way, this was the fourth complete hydraulic failure I had enjoyed in the UF and it certainly was the most exciting. I might say that we added lowering the landing gear by emergency hand pump to the crewman's qualification syllabus.

Dick Laskey had this to say about our adventure on 17 July 1999, "...*We alternated flying the plane while we were working on getting the gear extended. I'm not certain but I remember working on the port gear with the crew, then I relieved you and you went aft to help with the starboard gear. I remember yawing the aircraft to help get the gear extended...*" After flying that race track pattern for several hours, I was on a first-name basis with every rock, tree and bush on the earth beneath us, and thought that Dick had the motivation to do so also. My stout-hearted crew was somewhat the worse for wear after all the work chopping holes in 1260 and in pushing on the paddle to get the gear locked. I became "concerned" (impatient? no way!) so I do recall adding a little fresh manpower to the program. Dick continues, "*I also exited the aircraft through the overhead , after I was sure by*

*viewing your butt going aft that all had cleared the aircraft. It was a simple slide to the ground. My understanding of Trig and Math was basic. I did understand however that the distance to the ground was going to be somewhat shorter without the nose gear. In fact I was in the Ops center when CAPT Mac (Commander Macwhinney) entered and asked where I had gone. "*

Sigh! I did grab Dick by his belt (or whatever) while he was standing on the copilot's seat and tell him to go aft. However, you already know that I always regarded my unmarried friends as **Bachelor-Scum** for their delightfully innocent self-centeredness and for their firm belief that one never should put a personal desire off until tomorrow...try as he may, Dick can not deny that he was a bonafide B-S. I do admit that Dick was a very well behaved B-S, except for the time he created scandal in my house by putting hot fudge on his strawberry ice cream. In any case, I'm glad that he didn't break anything important.

Dick continues, *"...and I told him that I had exited through the overhead hatch, slid down the starboard side, inspected the nose gear and came in for a cup of coffee. He started laughing. Also on touch down we had arranged in the air that you would control the aircraft and that I would cut all power and fuel to the engines as soon as we were firmly on the ground. This was done and a routine roll out commenced until the nose touched and we received the sparks and smoke which was minimal. All in all a most interesting afternoon and one which will stay with me forever."*

There is some doubt in my mind that I would let the Archangel Gabriel, let alone a B-S, shut down my engines until I knew that I was going to stay on the runway. What's this about "sparks and smoke"? I didn't see it. I couldn't agree more on the "stay with me forever" part, though!

**No. 2.** On 18 Nov 1960 I took off very early in the morning in UF2G 2125 with Walt Larsen (*also known as "lucky"*) as copilot. *{Not everyone thought that Walt was the quirkiest pilot in the Coast Guard, but I did, and I was not alone. Alaska brings out quirks. I called winter "silly season", which peaked in the dark months of February and March. For the talented few, of course, silly season was a year-round thing). Therefore Walt was certainly not the only one in Alaska with quirks but he was head and shoulders above his peers.*

Some hunter at Pelican had inadvertently fired a magnum revolver (a bear stopper) while it was still in the holster, causing a goodly part of his leg to disappear.

We flew at night for two hours in actual instrument conditions on radio ranges with the usual ice on the wings. A radio range looked like an X on a navigational chart. The X formed the range legs. On either side of a leg one could hear an "A" or an "N". When on-the-leg ( or "on-the-beam") one heard a steady tone. They're all gone now and good riddance.

We reached a Coast Guard radio beacon (whose name I have forgotten, possibly Cape Spencer) at first light, headed out to sea into uncontrolled airspace and descended on instruments to 200 feet above the water using radar for clearance from ships and a radio altimeter for water clearance. We headed for the island that had a fiord that led to Pelican. The visibility in the rain, fog etc. was miserable so we slowed up, lowered flaps, ran the engine RPM up to 2300 and entered the fiord leading to Pelican on the right side of the channel, as all aviators in southeast Alaska would. If things turned to worms we would land on the water or make a steep left turn outbound.

I was thinking to myself that this was an Air Medal mission for sure when on the opposite side of the channel one of Alaska Coastal's amphibians flashed by that had just dropped off the letters and Sears mail order packages at Pelican. We landed on the water at Pelican, a boat brought out our wounded hunter, we flew him to Juneau, and then went home to Annette. All I got was 6.4 hours of flight time, 4.0 hours of actual instruments, one actual ADF (automatic direction finder) approach and one good story.

**No. 3.** My log book doesn't say when this happened but we were called to air evacuate an injured lumber jack from one of the floating-log-raft lumber camps. We landed in the water, shut the engines down and waited for our injured man. A row boat came out with one man rowing and one man riding in the back.

The unusual part was that the man rowing got in the airplane and the other man rowed to shore. I smelled a scam, so I told the corpsman to find out what crookedness was going on before our very eyes. After we got airborne enroute a hospital, the corpsman gave his report. It seems that the gentleman was fishing along a salmon stream where a big brown bear was also fishing. When the bear popped out of the brush and caught the man fishing on the bear's personal creek, the bear took offense (as bears so often do), and hit the man hard enough in the ribs to knock him into the middle of the creek (and to break his ribs) where he went downstream bobbing and breathing from time to time with the bear following on the bank. Eventually the bear went back to fishing and the man exited the creek.

At the lumber camp his ribs were taped within an inch of his life. He had rowed out because the other person was a numbskull who couldn't do anything right. It hurt more to watch the incompetent foul up the rowing than to do it himself. Amen! Case closed. Those old Alaskans were **tough!**

**No. 4.** In May 1999, Peggy found two copies of the Ketchikan Daily News dated November 3, 1959 (not quite 40 years old) while going through her treasures--she had saved them because the front page story was about a Baptist bush pilot missionary who had run out of fuel, and landed his float plane well beyond his flight plan destination (Ketchikan) safely on the water on the backside of Wrangell island. We at the Air Station looked for him for two days. Merrill Wood and I found him and we were mentioned in the story. We irreverently called the search, **The Case of the Missing Parson.**

He wound up missing again too. This time he tried to squeeze through a pass with a low ceiling in snow, couldn't continue and tried to make a steep turn back, stalled and crashed into the trees. Only a passenger survived the stall-spin. It took us a while to find the Parson because the plane had hardly disturbed those old spruce of the forest primeval.

It also reminds me that during this search I used some kindly instead of practical judgment (I was dumb as a stone) and I still regret it. The search weather was typically Southeast Alaska...crummy: 200-500 foot ceilings, visibility 4-10 miles in very light drizzle. My copilot was a fellow lieutenant and a designated Aircraft Commander who had not yet completed his Alaska Checkout. I was where I belonged, in the left seat (pilot's seat in fixed wing aircraft).

In a fjord the ceiling normally was smooth, well defined and often around 400-500 feet. The water was often smooth and protected. The sides of the fjord were usually steep with huge spruces climbing into the clouds. On this day we were in the fjord on the backside of Wrangell Island, where we found a fishing boat and talked to him on the radio: he hadn't seen the Parson. We found another boat and couldn't talk to him on the radio so we made one circle to check for deadheads (logs) in the water and landed. I popped my overhead hatch, stood on the seat and talked to the operator--he hadn't seen the Parson either. I sat down, closed the overhead hatch and noticed that my copilot had unstrapped from his seat and was standing in the passage way anticipating that we would swap seats. I didn't want to...it was the wrong time to do the right thing, but you already know I did... hum that old tune, "dumb-de-dumb-dumb".

To quell my conscience, I took a chart and pointed out our present position, pointed out how the fjord would narrow and described the "S" turn. My peer was attentive and I felt much better as we leveled off at 200 feet with flaps at 15 degrees, props at 2300 RPM, rudder boost on and carburetor mixtures rich. As the channel narrowed, the light seemed to disappear into the trees. The ceiling was getting lower and darker. A couple of puffs of clouds were lower than the rest. The ceiling ahead sloped down to the water. I said, "We'd better land"....no reaction "Land! Land!"... A microsecond of no reaction and I yanked the throttles closed, dropped full flaps and wrestled it on the water. We taxied through the "S" turn and broke out into good conditions, took off and continued the search.

I'm sure that my peer (while chagrined at the time) has forgotten about the whole incident, but I haven't. Some stupid mistakes are unforgettable. A last word about the Parson. I would guess that he was a victim of being too nice and too important for his instructor to harass. I doubt that his instructor ever explained the hard facts of being an aviator. He was a victim of kindness. But I learned. The next time I had a copilot at the controls who froze, I merely said, "I have it" and let him wonder what had just happened (it was a LCDR at Annette too, who was about to fly into the clouds after a VFR takeoff). Instructors are made, not born, especially those who hate to hurt the feelings of their peers and seniors. Did you notice how well I remembered this flight? I cheated--I wrote it down long ago. We of the archival persuasion are STRANGE people.

**Annette Automobiles.** I learned one other thing about places like Annette that have a small town atmosphere...when one drives, one waves at every vehicle one meets. I think it's the pleasure of meeting a fellow human being unexpectedly. I always smiled too, which came naturally. Most of the cars had been "ridden hard and put away wet" (aviators can talk horse language). They were indeed a battered lot and spare parts were hard to find. The rain and the mud were hard on vehicles. The only paved surfaces on the island were the runways...all the roads were gravel. When we left the island we shipped the Rambler to Seattle. We then flew to Seattle and took a train to the Midwest. One of the weathermen on the island was going to pick up the Rambler and drive it to San Francisco. He picked it up and promptly put it in a parking lot because it shook like a wet dog when he tried to drive it. I later got a flight to Seattle with the Navy, picked up the car and took it into a repair shop to have the wheels balanced. The wheel balance was fine after we took a pail or so of mud off the inside of each wheel.

## **Air Station San Francisco 1961-1963**

**Air Operations.** We primarily flew aerial intercepts of aircraft with an engine shut down coming from offshore, normally Honolulu. The Air Force operated a four engine transport, the C-124, that flew quite well on three engines and did so frequently enough to ruin a lot of our sleep. One wonders why they couldn't fly at least half their flights in the day light. One thought is that they flew at night so that they could use star sights and LORAN (Long Range Aid to Navigation) to fix their position. Judging from their lack of success, they might just as well have flown in the daytime. By the time Old Shaky had flown for umpteen hours from Honolulu, their position report was probably in error by 50 miles. Our biggest problem was finding them, which we normally did by homing on their radio transmissions with direction finders. When we did find a C-124, it would outrun a UF2G, even with one engine dead as a mackerel. When we did an intercept with a C-130, we could shut down the two outboard engines and keep up with them. I unfortunately was a junior Lieutenant (LT) with lots of UF time and therefore the designated instructor of newly assigned aviators fresh from flight training. Only angels, prophets, LCDRs (Lieutenant Commanders) and those LT's transferred in with a C-130 First Pilot designation flew often in the C-130, (sometimes known as the "aluminum overcast"). I did my intercepts in UF's.

**At Last!- Helicopter Training!** In September 1961 we packed everyone into the station wagon and drove off to Pensacola for helicopter training. I completed training and was designated Coast Guard Helicopter Pilot Number 397. On 19 December we were home in San Francisco and I flew my first Coast Guard helicopter HO4S 1328.

### **Air Stories.**

**No.1.** On 30 March 1963, we received a report of an overturned catamaran in the surf in Tomales Bay north of the Golden Gate 20 miles or so. We scrambled a UF (pilot Jim Brawley) to locate the boat and I piloted HO4S 1255. Jim proceeded at fast cruise, 160 knots or so, while I putsied along at 70, perhaps 80 knots. Jim located them and dropped a drift signal; I spotted the smoke and Jim's airplane orbiting the catamaran while I was still miles away. There were four people sitting between the capsized catamaran's two hulls looking less than happy. I hovered over them while the hoist operator hoisted them in a rescue basket and we then flew them two at a time to the beach where there was a sheriff's car waiting.

**No. 2.** We got a call about a distress on 500 kHz. I don't recall the details anymore but I do recall launching in the middle of the night in HU-16 1030 (UF2Gs are now HU-16E's and HO4S are HH-19's following Department of Defense nomenclature) with Bill Hall as copilot. We flew offshore, descended on instruments until we had visual contact with the water in miserable foggy conditions.

Number two engine (the starboard) became very noisy and very oily as some internal parts

such as a piston separated from its brethren. Since we aviators take a dim view of separated engine parts, and since all that banging, crashing and jolting around is very exhilarating early in the morning down in the fog and crud, we did the right things. We put maximum continuous power on #1 engine (2500 RPM and 45 inches of manifold pressure), shut down #2 engine by pulling the fuel mixture control to idle cutoff and feathering the propeller, and started climbing out to get on top of the fog bank.

The nearest and nicest airport was "WOXOF" (indefinite obscurity, zero visibility, zero ceiling), so we flew over the coastal mountains to Paso Robles and landed there in the beautiful weather common to the San Joaquin Valley. We had flown 5.7 hours with 3.0 hours of night time. My copilot LTJG Bill Hall hadn't been to bed since he thought that ping pong and fooling around were what one did on duty nights. Experience (bad) is a very persuasive teacher. Personally I was glad that I had a few hours of sleep when that engine turned ugly.

**Lieutenant Commander (LCDR).** I was promoted effective 1 July 1963, which was also the day I was detached (on a Sunday)— no "on or about 1 July", which would have given a choice of within five days either side of 1 July. Strangely, there was competition for my newly promoted, water-experienced pilot's body (there's a first time for everything). All the CO's were busily whining about needing pilots, but Miami had the biggest problem with the Neutrality Patrol. The solution suited every one but me...we gave our wetting down party at the Station on Saturday night 30 June. I wisely got sworn statements from every one there that I had indeed wetted-down my new stripes. I had been convinced of the value of quality paperwork somewhere along the line.

## **Air Station Miami 1963-1966 , dba "Those Magnificent Men and Their Flying Machines"**

*(On the advice of distinguished advisors, this section has been renamed as of 08-01-2014 in honor of my seadrome companions, some long gone, who shared the many adventures of the goat and the seadrome.)*

**Air Operations.** Air Station Miami is the "Busiest Air Sea Rescue Station in the World". The station was small in size but big in achievement when located in Coral Gables at Dinner Key. We used a seadrome in Biscayne Bay for day and night operations. We had six HU-16's with six parking spots with blast fences to keep the populace from being blown away by propeller blast. An HU-16 would water taxi up a long dredged channel with shallow water on either side and pilings marking the edge of the channel. When the HU-16 got to the ramp it normally would taxi up the ramp and shut down at the top. The ground crew would wash the salt off with a hose, lubricate the grease fittings on the landing gear hydraulic system, haul the airplane with a tow-bar-and-tractor to its parking place and push it in tail first so that it could taxi out nose first. This was done quickly so that the helipad at the head of the ramp would not be blocked. It was very much like a carrier operation on concrete

surrounded by tropical palm trees. The duty officer had a second story picture window looking out over the ramp and the seadrome, and he controlled operations with radios and a public address system. The hangar would hold one HU-16 being worked on ("in check") and the helicopters. The Station had been augmented for neutrality patrols. We flew with lists of bad-bad guys, good-bad guys and good-good guys. I personally couldn't tell them apart without the lists, except that the guys in the green suits in the green boats who we rarely saw were normally the good-good guys. I've often wondered who made the decisions about who was who.

My first CO was CAPT Lemuel (Ice) Sansbury. He was relieved by CAPT Owen W. Siler (later Commandant of the Coast Guard).

Operating six HU-16s and four HH-19s (later four HH-52s) kept us busy. The offshore islands are the path to the Caribbean and to South America that is followed by aircraft, ships and boats. The Gulfstream has current speeds of up to five knots to carry any disabled small vessel a long way northward from the breakdown position. Finally, druggers, dissidents and people escaping from Cuba (or trying to sneak back in) kept us busy.

When I left Miami my "HH-52 Summary" in my log book reports, "13 pump deliveries, 8 at night. 15 hoists, 11 at night. 1 copilot delivery at night". I don't have the faintest idea what the copilot delivery was all about. A wild guess is that some helicopter with one pilot on board was stuck somewhere with night approaching and needed another pilot before flying at night.

One of my favorite pictures (which I have lost) was of the seadrome with six HU-16s: three in the channel, one in the seadrome, one on takeoff run and one airborne, all enroute a search.

**Transition to the HH-52** (winter 1964). We initially flew H-19's, which were underpowered. On a warm, humid Miami day, great care was required to keep the turns at 2400 RPM when approaching a hover (and a prudent pilot might maintain 2500 RPM). The HH-52 had many of its dynamic components proven in the HH-19, such as the transmission, rotor head and blades. The turbine, despite having no foreign object excluder at the bell-mouth intake, had a GE T-58 rated at 1250 HP, derated to 730 HP to keep from damaging the transmission. The HH-52 could safely make a much steeper approach to a hover than the H-19, its altitude performance was much improved and if push-came-to-shove, requiring power that would require a transmission change, the power was there. Best of all, it had automatic stabilization equipment (ASE). Night ops became practical and non-hairy, after the beep-to-a-hover procedure was developed and authorized, leading to a higher transition to a hover (that protected tail rotors) and a higher hover monitored with the radio altimeter "bug" set to the minimum hover altitude. I used the hover lights as an early warning system also (Hover lights were wrongly maligned by those concerned about night vision. I just wanted to see) Nevertheless our transition service-wide was not smooth. We continued to use the procedures especially developed for low powered, reciprocating engine helos: a long low approach with a gradual application of hovering power, resulting in a low hover (about five feet between the wheels and the water). We consequently dunked a lot of tail rotors, leading to a forced water landing and on occasion capsizing when the rotor stopped. *The HH-52 floated beautifully upside down.*

Note: A “best practice” of using the radio altimeter bug set at the minimum hovering altitude at night was not widely used, there being a preference to set the ‘bug’ at the autorotation pitch-up altitude (I recall it being 140’) and leaving it there. It was particularly important, day or night, when in a difficult hover over an aid-to-navigation, a light house or any such structures representing an impaling risk.

The pilot established a hovering altitude permitting a safe margin between the structure and the hull.

--- The copilot set the ‘bug’ to just barely “light off”.

--- When the light came on, the copilot warned the pilot who applied sufficient power to raise the helo to “light off”.

The best practice was not yet doctrine in 1983 when I investigated the crash of HH-52 1443. The pilot in command, in the course of recovering a Chief Petty Officer off a skeleton light structure, allowed the helo to settle onto the structure where the situation went from bad to worse, resulting in strike damage but minor injuries. None of the pilots at the station used this best practice and it was not contained in the standardization documents.

**HH-52 Glitch.** The HH-52 had many virtues and one vice--the bell mouth entrance to the single turbine was directly above the windshield and had no foreign object excluder. Anything that came off the windshield would go up into the bell mouth, there to be ingested by the turbine with occasionally spectacular results. Burps, momentary loss of power and occasionally a forced landing were the consequences. LT. E.P.Ward was over Biscayne Bay one day at 500 feet in a heavy rain storm with the windshield wipers working. A wiper tang (about the size of a penny) that held the rubber to the wiper blade came off, and entered the turbine which promptly quit. At Astoria we also discovered that snow could build up on the windshield and finally come off in wads--neither the turbine nor the turbine blades liked it, and neither did I. I do not like even momentary losses of power in a single turbine helicopter.

**We Move To Opalocka.** In the fall of 1965 we abandoned the buildings at Dinner Key and moved to a new Air Station at the old Marine field at Opalocka. Operating from an airfield was so much easier than from a seadrome. The move however did not go smoothly. The public address system wasn’t in, the telephones were inadequate and our communication system at first was by bicycle-messenger. It seems that the electronic contract gave a 90 day performance time and the 90 days had not expired yet. I’m sure the Coast Guard saved a dollar...maybe two. I had been the project officer for the air station with no power to affect the result beyond whining vigorously, which was as easy as breathing. Those staff people hated to see me coming, not that they didn’t ignore me - - the way to paradise for them was by saving money, no matter what the affect was on the Coast Guard operation.

**Air Stories** You will only get the funny and the outrageous memories of my flight operations in Miami. We flew a lot...about 40 hours fixed wing and 20 hours helicopter per month. Some of it was attention getting.

No. 1. **Night Engine Fire.** On 24 June 1964 I as PIC and CP LTjg Dick D'Aurora were flying HU-16 2127 practicing night water landings in the seadrome when an engine caught on fire , at least I judged it was on fire from all the sparks and flames. It did have the decency to be fairly quiet about the whole thing. We shut it down and made a single engine landing in the seadrome and got towed to the ramp.

No. 2. **Tropical Deluge in the Channel.** My most exciting moment in the seadrome was the night I was returning from a long patrol, beat a thunder storm to the station and landed. We were in the channel when the thunderstorm hit. An HU-16 is an overgrown wind vane while on the water. I was no longer a pilot, I was half-sailing-ship-skipper fighting the high winds and half-submarine-skipper in the torrential rain. I had a rotten choice: drive a float under with excessive power on one engine turning away from the channel edge or hit one of the poles marking the edge of the water taxi channel. I did not go aground nor did I hit a channel marker pole. I did however drive a float so far under that I saw the red wing light blinking under water. Now there was a "yellow sheet" write-up! Under aircraft discrepancies, I could have written, "Drain port wing light of water and while you're about it, drain the wing too." I wonder if I had the nerve. Probably I did. I am likely to be euphoric and a little giddy after returning from a long patrol and semi-winning a hair raising tussle with a thunderstorm. I subscribe to the theory (right or wrong) that the boss would rather drain a wing of water than pick pilings out of a wing.

No. 3. **Open Sea Landing.** On 18 August 1964 I landed HU-16 2127 in the open sea at Cay Lobos, picked up the Bahamian light house keeper's wife who was hemorrhaging , made a four JATO bottle takeoff and flew her to Nassau (The four rocket bottles get the airplane airborne faster and reduce the danger of damaging the aircraft). My copilot Don Aites and I were really intrigued by the nautical chart we were using to keep from landing on a shoal. It was based upon a survey by the Ranger back in 1839. Or was it 1847? We of course wound up using a pair of highly skeptical eye balls. I hope the light keeper didn't mind rowing so far. Don Aites reminded me that Chief Tokarski was our aviation ordnance man who rigged our JATO bottles. It was the Chief's last day in the Coast Guard and he was no longer on flight orders. Don asked Captain Sansbury for flight orders for the Chief for this one flight. I'm very glad he did. It's nice to know that one's JATO bottles will work when one pushes the ignition button. Thanks again, Don! You too, Chief!

No. 4. **Sinker at Night.** On the night of 19 Dec 1964, we scrambled an HU-16 and an HH-52 responding to a sinking boat distress call from the cabin cruiser Helen. You may not have noticed, but when somebody decides to sink, they pick the most disgusting weather they can find. In fact I call weather that's totally repellant "Coast Guard Weather" (The only exceptions are those days when the sun is smiling gloriously and a strong wind is piling up the waves to trap unwary boaters). Let me be the first to tell you that people lose heart at night, that is, they get scared in the dark. This gives them the chance to have us do risky things in ugly weather in the dark when we're tired. I always loved quadruple threats. In other words, we were doing once again what we normally do.

Pete Peterson went ahead in the HU-16 to home-in on the sinking boat before the boat stopped transmitting, flying at fast cruise (2200 rpm versus the normal 2000 rpm giving about 160

knots) while Ed Dempsey and I putted along at 80 knots in the HH-52. After locating the sinking boat by homing-in on the sinker's radio transmissions, Pete then made a night pump drop from 200' that was perfect. The parachute on the water-tight pump can nearly hit the boat and the trail line did hit the boat. The pump can was in the sea next to the boat. Unfortunately this guy's idea of Coast Guard weather was a little too good. The 30 knot northerly wind with higher gusts had built up quite a wave system blowing against the Gulf Stream. The skipper lost all the skin on one arm trying to get the pump can from the sea into the boat.

My setting a pump can on his deck was the only way he could use it. So I set the pump can on his deck. The boat (as usual) did not cooperate a bit; it pretended that it was a cork in a maelstrom, and to add insult to injury its long whip antennas looked like they were trying to clean the sky of helicopters. I might add that one can work up quite a sweat chasing a boat with a pump can hanging from the hoist cable. The owner later wrote us a letter thanking us, and saying that the shipyard in Fort Lauderdale had replaced 10,000 fasteners in the boat's wooden hull.

No. 5. **Survivor in Lifejacket.** On Sunday morning 3 April 1965, I took off from Dinner Key at first light in HH-52 1384. A passing boat had found a small cabin cruiser that was disabled and had taken it in tow. The operator had donned a life jacket, and had attempted to swim the two miles to shore to get help. The lady and her children had been left behind on the boat. My crew man was Petty Officer Bagn (I think he was an AD3). He was sitting in the copilot's seat with a drift signal in his lap. We found the area very easily where the missing person should be just off Miami Beach, and I set up a search pattern. Suddenly Bagn sighted the man in his life jacket. I know it's not nice to say that Bagn was about to do something dreadful in his pants, but I thought he was. I had to tell him twice (loudly!) to drop the drift signal. We landed in the water and picked up a very tired but happy floater (he had given up swimming some time ago), and then flew by the towed boat with the door open so that our newly acquired passenger could give a heart warming wave to the frantically waving persons in the towed boat. When I got home I told Peggy the tender tale. Well, that was not exactly the whole story. It seems that the people in the towed boat were somebody else's wife and kids. Petty Officer Bagn did get his case of beer at the next morning muster for his outstanding sighting, and nothing but kind words. One is allowed to get a case of "buck fever" when one sights one's first survivor.

No. 6. **Cruise Ship on Fire.** Early in the morning (3 AM) on 13 November 1965, I got a call at home that the station needed another helicopter because a cruise ship, the Yarmouth Castle, had caught on fire in the channel to Nassau. I drove 17 miles to the Station at Opalocka. LT Lonnie Mixon, Petty Officer Morse and I launched in HH-52 1407 at 3:28 AM. It took us an hour and twenty minutes to arrive at the scene (it was 120 miles away). We could see the glow of the fire from 60 miles away as well as the parachute flares. We were the first helicopter airborne and the first one to the scene at 4:48 AM. From Great Isaac Light we could see the flames soaring 100' in the air. There were lifeboats on scene searching for survivors in the water and we joined the search. The On-scene-commander asked us to take some badly burned people from one of the rescue vessels (The Bahama Star). It was still night. *While I was hovering over the vessel the dang tourists kept popping flash bulbs in my eyes.* Lonnie and PO Morse laid the burn victims on the cabin floor till we ran out of floor space (there

was no way that they could have sat up...they were unconscious). We could only take three victims for that reason. We flew the 60 miles to Nassau, landed, helped the medics take our victims to the ambulance and refueled. By this time there were two other helos on scene. Lonnie flew the second sortie in the right seat (pilot's seat), and I helped PO Morse lift the victims out of the rescue basket. These victims were conscious, had been dreadfully burned and there was no way to lift them without causing pain (Heart rending). We took them to Nassau also, refueled, grabbed a quick egg, toast and coffee, and then searched upon arrival on scene. We saw all kinds of trash but no survivors or bodies. We finally landed at Opa Locka having flown three sorties and 8.7 hours in the air. The aircraft had only one discrepancy, 'Clean cabin of people parts and deodorize'. What a wild night. Note: This is an account that I wrote and mailed to my parents just days after the fire, which I finally found in some old papers that a sister had saved for me after my parents had passed on (*Let's hear it for archivists*).

No. 7. **Runaway Prop.** On 8 December 1965 we had a big daylight search using six or so HU-16s. Kirk Miller and I were in HU-16 7243. Dave Irons was in the adjoining search area. We were at about 500' happy as a clam when the starboard engine's propeller ran away. There is something extremely unsettling about a runaway propeller. I think it's the noise best described as an accelerating scream. I hit the feathering button in a heart beat, and it took me several heart beats to remember to pull the mixture control to idle cutoff, so I had to push the feathering button again. Meanwhile Dave had shut down an engine for cause. We were supposed to get another aircraft to escort us when we had an engine out, so I told Dave that I'd escort him if he'd escort me. I've often wondered what the Patrick Air Force Base tower thought when two aircraft landed with one engine a piece shut down. Dave says that when the engine quit (with the customary banging and oil everywhere, I should imagine), *"We started a descent, even with METO.* (Bernie note: METO is max-power-except-takeoff, which for the R-1820 is 2500 rpm and 45 inches of manifold pressure). *I can still feel the surge of relief when both drop tanks let go...it felt just like gaining translational lift in a helicopter when those tanks fell free. If I would have known that my memory was going to fog up, I would have written all that good stuff down when it happened. Today it sounds frightening just to think about it but not then. Between bad weather flying at Annette, night water landings at Dinner Key, a few close calls picking up refugees when Castro's ships were trying to abort our success, and some really scary stuff, like engine failures, no wonder I sleep so well, knowing we don't do that anymore".*

“

No. 8. **Cruise Sailing Vessel Aground at Night.** Early in the morning on 31 December 1965, I got a call at home from the station that the cruise sailing vessel Mandalay had run aground six miles south of Fowey Rock Light in high winds and heavy seas, that there were two helos on scene with Dave Irons in one and Billy Murphy in the other, and they needed one more helo to assist in taking off the passengers.

I drove rapidly in (okay, speeded in-- but only a little), ran up HH-52A 1388 and waited for LT Rick Folker to show up. I was of course musing that he should stop drinking so much, the bachelor scum, or drive faster, or cease whatever it was that was holding him up. Now mind you, I was very fond of Rick, but as I have mentioned several times "Lord, give me patience--But HURRY!" In short, I

was fuming. Then a police car pulled up and I feared the worst. Rick was in trouble with the law; not that I was surprised. Bachelors! Rick jumped out of the patrol car and into the helo.

While enroute the Mandalay, he explained. It seems that he had run out of gas in his trusty VW Beetle (he could no longer afford to pay the insurance on his sport cars due to minor speeding peccadilloes) and started running towards the station in his orange flight suit. He was doing his best imitation of a four minute mile when a patrol car pulled up along side and offered him a ride to the station. It gave Rick quite a turn, because he normally had reason to examine his conscience (his driving was a weakness) when the police appeared. Surprisingly, I believed his story, especially that part about running out of gas.

Dave and Billy had things well in hand. The Mandalay was hard aground on her keel but was still very lively. There was no way that anyone could have hoisted safely from that sailing vessel covered with rigging. It looked like a big version of a fly swatter, a helicopter swatter actually. Instead, Dave had the vessel's crew stream a rubber raft with four passengers in wet suits out from the vessel using a nylon line to control and to recover the raft. Dave had just picked up his four so I moved into position. The wind was really blowing hard. I could hover using 50% torque with a normal fuel load and three persons on board. I picked up my four persons with no more difficulty than you would expect with 10 foot breakers dashing by. I always used all the lights the helicopter carried, which did make those big breakers look weird. At this point Billy called on 381.8 to say that during his last hoist the breakers had raised and dropped the basket with one person in it and had broken the hoist hook (Survivor was OK but basket was lost), so would I mind picking up another four people. Since I was hovering with only 70% torque, I said something like "no sweat" and picked up another four.

While we were climbing out, I smelled something that told me we needed barf bags for our passengers -- desperately and at once. When I passed this thought to the hoist operator, he said "no problem" or whatever, and said that before abandoning ship, the survivors had raided the New Year's booze supply and had tucked bottles into their wet suits, which they were now using most enthusiastically to celebrate their deliverance. Those were easily the happiest people I have ever rescued. You should have seen them wave when they ran away from the helicopter. What did those nice Air Force people think? Boozing on a federal airplane! I wonder if they thought that the Coast Guard really knows how to treat its survivors and how do I get into that outfit?

By the way, I had to keep the collective up a little to load the rotor when I landed at Homestead Air Force Base because that rotor RPM wanted to go sky high. I don't know how much I weighed but I'd guess that counting the bodies, bottles and wet suits, the helo weighed somewhere around 9,100 pounds, which slightly exceeded the normal max gross weight of 8,300 pounds by 800 pounds. In defense, I will say I could have auto rotated effortlessly with that wind.

**Billy Ed Murphy** checked his log book and it did not show the number of hoists he made but that there were several. Al Dahms was the Pilot-in Command because he was the senior of the two. However, Billy Ed was the most qualified so Al put him in the right seat which in a helicopter is the pilot's seat. He does remember that one of the ladies that he hoisted refused to part with her dog...ditto for her bottle of champagne. One must admire this group of survivors for keeping their priorities straight.

**Dave Irons** says he recalls like it was yesterday that it was his 35th birthday, but the rest of it is a little hazy. He wrote, *“Actually, I do recall that... swinging mast and no communications. Ended up with (writing on) a chalk board instructions to the vessel to put three people at a time in a raft and pay it out downwind. Then we made the pickup from that raft. I also recall the relief I felt when you and Billy Ed arrived on scene. I remember thinking that just no way was a single helo and crew going to pick up that many people before the ship sank...After picking up one basket (load) and the individual got aboard the helo, the crewman started to lower the basket for another rescue, it fell free from the cable...someone was looking out for us when it held together until the occupant was safely in the helo. I recall the 40 footer arriving on scene and what a spectacular job of maneuvering he performed. Until he arrived, I was certain the helos had performed miracles, then the 40 boat picked up the skipper from the Mandalay and I realized y'all had only performed in a superior manner.”*

I thought that the boat cox'n was probably as pleased as we were to get out of there with no more than a few extremely clear memories and a lot of relief.

No. 9. **CPO Flight Crew.** I have no idea when this occurred but I shamelessly recall it with great pleasure. One afternoon I went out to the flight line for an HU-16 patrol and found that my flight crew not only had a couple of extra persons but they were all Chief Petty Officers. I felt honored because the CPO's were prudent (cubed) when it came to earning their flight pay. Of course I was probably only the best of a bad lot, and they were driven by harsh circumstance, either fly or lose their flight pay.

No. 10. **Lookout Motivation.** Again, I no longer remember when this occurred. We had a common practice that if a lookout on a SAR aircraft made a good sighting, that the youngster got a case of beer at the morning muster, with suitably glowing comments. The station frequently provided additional HU-16 search aircraft for searches in the Gulf of Mexico to assist Air Station St. Petersburg. There was a big search in the Gulf for a missing boat with several people on board, and the Station launched an HU-16, pilot in command LT Ed Dempsey, copilot LT George Krietmeyer. *Ed was a BMC before OCS and flight school, his first tour had been at CGAS Brooklyn and his second was here in Miami. This was George's first tour.*

The search was very successful. One of Ed's lookouts spotted the survivors (barely alive) in the open Gulf on an awash hatch cover surrounded by sharks that had already devoured one person. The pilots' sea evaluation indicated that an offshore landing would be marginal and they asked CGAS ST. Petersburg for one of the new amphibious helicopters. An HH-52A, pilot in command Capt Marty Flesh, launched from CGAS ST. Petersburg and recovered the survivors. It was a great ending to a desperate situation. The survivors were also extremely lucky. They had not been on the vessel that was the original search object. No one knew that their vessel had sunk.

We flew many other missions besides search and rescue, some of them long and not very inspiring (at least the lookouts felt so), particularly monitoring ship and boat traffic in the Bahamas under the general mission of neutrality patrol. To inspire better lookout performance, some of us promised a case of beer to anyone who made a significant sighting (this was a long, long time ago). We normally awarded the case of beer at the morning muster so that as many people as possible

knew about the successful SAR case and the excellent performance.

The next morning I congratulated Ed on the successful mission and asked if he intended to reward the lookout with a case of beer. He said that no, he would not. I was dumbfounded and asked why not?

Ed told me that before the lookout made the sighting, that he Ed had gone aft to answer a call of nature and had caught the lookout reading a sex novel. The lookout's improved performance was primarily due to confiscation of the book and didn't warrant a case of beer. *Actually, Ed's comments were considerably more explicit but the above is a reasonable if colorless facsimile.*

Lookout motivation has never been simple and certainly requires situational response. Some things change slowly if at all.

### **A Sample of Engine Shutdowns of R-1820's before the Improved Reliability Program**

In the fall of 1963, I was enjoying life at 1,000 feet over Miami Beach, sitting in an HH-19 and doing something useful no doubt, such as counting the sharks offshore or looking for persons in trouble. My enjoyment was nipped when I heard an unhappy voice with problems. The voice on 381.8 MHz was then-LTJG Don Aites, reporting an engine shut down over Miami and that the HU-16 was heading posthaste for home and the seadrome at Biscayne Bay. There was no alarm but no happiness either. *Note: The crew was probably ferrying an HU-16 back to the Air Station at Dinner Key from a local Miami field. A common procedure was to land at a local air field at night when a PIC was tired from a long patrol and didn't feel up to a night water landing.*

The next call however showed some alarm. Don was trying to restart the engine and the propeller wouldn't move, let alone unfeather. Then I saw the albatross streaking for the seadrome well below me in Miami's glorious sunshine, but with not a single happy aircrewman on board.

It was easy to see why.- - - The operating engine had a giant oily racing stripe down the port side, and the starboard engine was shutdown with the prop irrevocably feathered, according to Don.

- - - The pilot-in-command LTJG Wally Pawley touched down in the seadrome well short of the gear-down navigable water. It appeared that he kept it on the step as long as he could by reducing power on the operating engine to maintain directional control until he was as close as he could get to deeper water in the seadrome.

How did the wrong engine get shut down? Easy. Just do the following,

- - - We flew the Albatross with the pilots' windows open when there was no rain. Any engine banging and thrashing was close at hand and at least exhilarating (and for those of us on the wimpy side... alarming).

- - - The engine shutdown procedure as taught in flight emphasized speed as well as analysis. The analysis was pretty straightforward: the bad engine had a throttle pulled back. A pilot who

couldn't simulate adding power and shutting an engine down in less than 20 seconds was a bit slow. Not one of us was slow...truth to tell, we were fast. A talented few could simulate an engine shutdown in as little as ten seconds. Because the identification of the failed engine was not well taught, errors were possible and probably occurred in this case.

- - - If the prop high pressure electric pump didn't get power, the prop stayed feathered, causing acute anxiety as in this case: coming home on the bad engine.

You might think that if I can clearly recall seeing that HU-16 and its oily racing stripe with two seriously annoyed LTJG pilots on board (not to mention the flight crew), I'd know more about what happened next. I don't have a clue. As a seeker of truth, I polled a number of old timers who had flown with me in those Biscayne Bay/Dinner Key seadrome days. Not one recalled it, but they did bring up a number of memories of exciting times with engines (and props) in the seadrome and elsewhere. Nobody believed that the PIC could keep the aircraft on the step, even by reducing power on the operating engine, before the pilot ran out of rudder control as the aircraft decelerated. *They also mentioned the sun, a yardarm and beer several times...Archiving is not nearly as popular as Happy Hour.*

- - - **Then-LCDR Deese Thompson** (later VADM) has this story about taxiing on the step: *"I did land a Goat with one engine feathered on Biscayne Bay on a first light departure when we blew a jug. I could not keep the bird on the step after touchdown, because the good engine powered us around in a wide arc. Coming off the step, there was not enough rudder control to go to the ramp between the seadrome pilings. We shut down and got towed to the ramp by the 40'er. (if we had been able to rig a sea drogue I believe we might have taxied up to the ramp or buoy, like we did in PBM's.) There are many Miami stories; does anyone else remember Dick Huxtable imbedding a seadrome pole light thru the Goat wing spar?"* I saw a photo of the light neatly snatched from a piling during a night water landing and firmly embedded in what I recall (wrongly) being the starboard wing. Night water landings were interesting in Biscayne Bay, in part because of the procedure and in part because of the fishermen who anchored their boats in the middle of the seadrome and turned off their lights to avoid being chased away by the crash boat. A goodly number of pilots preferred night scramble take offs in the channel as compared to taking off in the seadrome and encountering who can tell what blacked-out fishermen on the takeoff run.

- - - While water taxiing on the step was not likely in the good-engine-shut-down case, I did recall a time in SE Alaska at Air Detachment Annette, watching then-LT Thompson land with an engine shut down and park the HU-16 on the line. When queried, Deese had this to say, *"The difference at that Annette single engine was, I was able to keep good speed on the rollout, and by using brakes and goodly engine RPM we made it to the chocks, no sweat. Prefer a runway to a seadrome for single engine landings where possible, but runways were sparse in S.E. Alaska. Over the years in my many post-maintenance test hops, we feathered the prop if there had been any prop maintenance performed and I can't remember ever having one not feather or unfeather. Credit the guys in the chambray shirts out on the hanger deck, and their mates in the prop shop for their diligence to turn out quality work to keep us all around for the next flight."*

- - - **Then-LT George Krietmeyer** (later Captain) recalled that a dead prop is better than one that goes into reverse on landing approach. (Fortunately the resulting crash was in the seadrome, water being much more forgiving than terra firma.)

I was at USC's safety officer school when that prop reversed on his landing approach to the seadrome. The prop went past the low pitch stop and became the aeronautical equivalent of a flat plate equal to the area of the prop arc. No air went through it. The tail buffeted from the turbulent air and of course the aircraft yawed sharply while losing air speed. I do recall a photo of the alive-and-well aircrew with big smiles after the crash. The cause was a "tool" (a little block of metal) that enabled the prop overhaul mechanic to do the job without a helper. At the time there was no requirement to account for all tools used in maintenance, and the block was left in the prop dome to add excitement to a routine water landing. George recalls, *"I still carry the "bearing support block" that AR& SC left in the prop dome. There were 16 in the dome for the prop to rotate on - mine is number 17. Glad I was landing on Biscayne Bay and not at Opa Locka. 28 April 1964 - that's over 50 years ago. I think Lonnie was on watch in the RCC when it happened? Lots of fun stories from Dinner Key days!!"*

- - - **Then-LT Lonnie Mixon** nailed it with his recollection , *"What a lucky bunch we are!! The thrill of flying the old "goat", channel takeoffs at night at Dinner key, summer storms in the triangle and just being some of the few pilots that ever got to fly her. GREAT memories for us all!!"* Lonnie went on to serve with great distinction as a Coast Guard exchange officer with the Air Force flying Jolly Greens in Viet Nam. His story is well worth reading in the Ptero history.

We had other engine shutdowns and we were not alone. **Then-LT Howie Thorsen** (later VADM) recalls, *"I have enjoyed reading of the exploits at Dinner Key. I was in Argentia for much of the time covered, and had my first look at a Goat upon reporting to San Diego in Oct '62 as a newly designated maintenance officer. On my first day, I was shown one of the 1820s on an engine stand, prop and cowling removed. The spline end of the drive shaft was twisted, roughly 45 degrees, and one of the pistons was visible (I was told it was not in its proper cylinder.) The Goat had launched on a Duck Butt flight, with drop tanks full, anticipating a 8-10 hour flight well out in the Pacific while small Air Force jets transited to or from the east coast and Hawaii. Just about the time it reached station, at 8,000 feet or so, something caused what was essentially a sudden stoppage of the prop. One helluva experience for the pilots and crew, but they made it back home-with those 'keep tanks' still in place! The pilot (Joe) is long gone, but there were many who wondered why on earth he didn't drop them. I think the consensus was that he wanted to save the cost. One of many Goat stories we love to read."*

I thought that **Dick Laskey** might have been at CGAS San Diego at that time. Dick responded, *"No, I remember a 'Joe', but can't remember his full name. I'll try and locate a SD roster. That incident evidently occurred after my time."*

*The incident that ended my flying was a 2 AM Scramble out of SD for an inbound P5M with one engine feathered. Remember running from the BOQ to the ramp, climbing in to UF 1273 and strapping in while listening to Ops deliver the sit report. The WX was zero/zero at SD, as I followed the white line to TO speed, I remember looking at the Tower with the red light burning.*

*At lift-off we proceeded to our intercept. I was then in touch with North Island Radar who was giving me vectors to the intercept, I was also in contact with the P5M pilot. Shortly after breaking into a clear night sky, approximately at 400 ft., a call from my Mech who informed me that oil was streaming along the starboard side of the A/C. I asked my CP to check the number 2 engine, he reported that it was "on fire". I ordered him to feather the number 2 engine as I held my right hand over the number 1 button. We feathered number 2 and turned toward Lindberg. I informed the P5M pilot of my situation and apologized for the inconvenience. He responded that he understood. North Island offered a Radar assist to North Island which I declined due to my familiarity with Lindberg. The approach was made and we left the aircraft parked in the middle of RWY 9/270. A cart came out for us and took us back to our quarters, the flight lasted 24 minutes. About an hour later the Chief in the Engineering Division came and told me that the oil cap had been left ajar on the pre-flight. I asked him to deal with the matter and he replied that he would do so. I have no idea who was responsible. It was a mistake. The CO, Capt. Robert Waldron presented me with a Commendation Letter, which I still have hanging in my office. Some time later I went to my Annual Flight Physical at Balboa, Naval Hospital. At the end of the exam the Flight Surgeon asked if we had any 'personal problems', I raised my hand and he called me over for a private consultation. I explained my symptoms {those of diabetes}, and he asked me to stay for further exams and tests. And the rest is history, PEB, Medical Retirement. Then on to JNJ and a new career. That was the tough part, at the time flying was my life, no more. But we do survive."*

### **What changed the R-1820 from extremely exciting to boring?**

**CAPT Hardy M. Willis** (aviator 476) told me this story. While much younger, he had sat at a desk in headquarters EAE sending reparable R-1820's to overhaul, as fast as they occurred. One day the HQ Flight Safety officer, Fred Schubert (later RADM), came down to complain that the engine failure rate was generating a lot of letter reports, some of which made exciting reading. Further, that at the rate that engines were failing, we were sure to have a dual engine failure. That unpleasant bit of news led the Coast Guard and the Navy to start a program to improve R-1820 engine reliability. A great many goat drivers appreciated their effort and the result. My reviewers commented:

- - - **VADM Deese Thompson** set the record straight on several things, *"The CAPT HARDY you reference was Hardy M Willis, who was in EAE at that time. He retired in '76 as a CAPT. & Aviator # 476. Grand fellow, last I knew he was retired in FL, Older than dirt, he was born in 1917, so he'd be in the late 90's if he hasn't gone to Heaven. He was one of the regulars on the "EAE stools" at Dankers watering hole next to the HQ building at 7th & D. That was one of the only stress relievers for trapped aviators in HQ in that era.*

*Methinks that some of the 1820 failures were due to the chrome piston rings that were installed during NARF engine overhauls - IRANs - as Bear called them...a bit fuzzy on the details.*

- - - **Bear Moseley** recalls, *"Didn't have the problem with the Goat at Arlington – It did not*

*fly that much and when an aviator no longer had to fly to get flight pay they transferred it out. We did lose a R-2800 engine shortly after I got there and we replaced a few jugs on others. The culprit for engines at the time was IRAN – not the country but Inspect and Repair As Necessary. The navy had some pretty loose standards on what was necessary. I talked Tom Epley into sending the 2800s to Piedmont for overhaul. Now those people knew how to overhaul engines. Two Martins each flying 60 plus hours a month for three years and every engine was removed for high time, some a little over but I never got (any part) in a crack over it.”*

*- - - **Not everybody was unlucky. Bill Boucher:** “ On a positive note. Between Port Angeles( EO Farenbacher), Annette( Mercier and Cope ) and Arlington( Moseley ), I had some 3,000 + hours in the goat. Mod's 1 & 2 and never had to shut down an engine!”*

### **More Pilings In Wing**

*- - - **CAPT George Kriemeyer** (07-30-2014) said, “The Pole in the Wing belongs to Paul Lewis and me. We were making a night water landing after a search and the 40 footer laid the sea lane. Paul was a very good pilot (he and I were classmates BUT he decided to stay an extra year-- he was also a good football player). At any rate I was the AC and he was the pilot in the left seat. He made a great approach BUT the sea lane was laid in the wrong place. The left flap hit the pole and we both noticed a bump but we landed OK and after we parked we noticed the "hole in the flap". I'm pretty sure it was the 7215 on 18 July 1964.*

*You might also remember that Paul and I took a training flight to New Smyrna Beach on 18 March 1964. I was the First Pilot (AC) and he was a First Pilot (CP). At any rate I flew left seat to New Smyrna and we parked - had a Coca Cola and Paul got in the left seat for the flight home. We taxied out and I was on the radio telling folks in the area on Unicom that we were taxing to the runway. I was looking out the right window for traffic ( No tower) and I felt a BIG bump. The crewman in back said "You just hit a tree"!!!! Sure enuff - Paul was right on the center line BUT our wingspan was so big that he hit a tree!!*

*I sure had quite an education at MIA. We all did.*

*Oh - by the way - the aircraft was the 2127 - same one I had the prop go in reverse on. They replaced the same wing tip twice. Name withheld for security reasons...George”*

*- - - **VADM Thompson** commented, “George's ‘wing rash’ came after I left Dinner Key in June '62. The UF-2G that took off the sealane piling top with the AtoN light on top and drove the piece into the left main wing spar, happened in the spring of 1961. I looked in my log book for some notation of the after-repair test hop I flew, but they all just say "test" The PIC was Dick Huxtable, who was the electronics officer, can't remember the copilot, maybe Joe Russo. Nobody hurt except for bruised pride, since we got it up the ramp and parked by the fence.*

*We had to take the wing off at the root extension. Got a C-123 to fly us a used-but-good one from the NARF at Pensacola. Attaching the wing was a hoot. We had no torque wrench that was rated high enough for torquing the main spar attach bolts.*

*Can't remember the required ft/lbs torque exactly, but I do remember we had to weigh a few mechs until we found one that weighed 180 pounds. We put the fellow 2 feet out from the bolt, and cranked the wrench around until the bar was horizontal and wouldn't rotate any more with the mech verticle. cramped quarters, for sure. . There were no jigs to ensure we had the wing in alignment, so we measured tail-top to wing-tip on each wing, and came within an inch or two of being equal. Now for the "test flight".*

*There was no gouge or pubs for a post wing replacement test hop. The guys at NARF PNS suggested we go "fast", hang on & listen and feel for vibration(s) So, I decided to go up to 9,000 ft, nose her way over, go as fast as we could and look for any shuddering, whatever. We were light, and got to about 235 kts IAS or thereabouts on the way down, which I believe was Nte (not to exceed) airspeed in the flight handbook. Nothing happened and we lived happily ever after.*

*Deese ."*

In summary, let me repeat Lonnie Mixon's recollection , **"What a lucky bunch we are!! The thrill of flying the old "goat", channel takeoffs at night at Dinner key, summer storms in the triangle and just being some of the few pilots that ever got to fly her. GREAT memories for us all!!"**

## **Coast Guard Air Station Astoria 1966-1968**

**Operations.** I'd been a LCDR for three years and was about to become a Commander (CDR). I was designated Executive Officer of the Air Station and Deputy Group Commander of Group Astoria. In short, after thirteen years I was no longer a watch stander. The station was small with a dozen or so officers and we didn't fly more than 20 or so hours a month per pilot. It was very slow and very comfortable (yawn) except for one thing. We and Cape Disappointment Life Boat Station were the guardians of the Columbia River Bar. I have seen 50 foot breaking waves on the bar and you don't have any idea how impressive that is until you've seen one, up close and personal.

The air station was a single building with four corners that could hangar four helicopters. The maintenance shops were on the ground floor and the offices and watch stander quarters were on the second floor. We were located on Clatsop County Airport which was out in the boonies. How far in the rural areas? One night our duty officer Alex Klimshuk had to use a .45 to finish off a deer that had been hit by a landing DC-3's prop. When Alex ( in his role as a standup comic) told me he had fired a .45 the previous night, I played standup comic too, gave him an article 32 warning and asked him to tell me the whole truth and nothing but the truth. One does not get a whole lot of bull droppings from the astonished recipient of an Article 32 UCMJ warning, though convincing Alex that humor

must be timely was a full time job.

**CO/XO Philosophy: The Flying Leader.** The hard part of the CO/XO's job is to keep the important matters from being gobbled up by the collateral duties of day-to-day air station administration. A CO/XO's real business is performing Coast Guard missions, and the business of an air station is operating aircraft in support of those missions. The administrative tail should never wag the mission dog. The aircrew and aircraft represent both the greatest risk and biggest investment, and it behooves the CO/XO therefore to expend maximum management attention to factors affecting aircrew and aircraft mission performance.

**The Dark Side.** There are some factors that mitigate against such a practical outcome.

1. There will always be some seniors who want the CO/XO to be available at a phone at all times. I offer no solution except to encourage them to have their subordinates know their CO/XO's mind well enough to act in his/her absence and to advise the CO/XO promptly of their action.
2. There are also some CO/XO's who become obsessed by the details of administration, and can't even go flying without their minds wandering dangerously from the business of flying. The cure is to delegate power and responsibility and the ability to communicate requirements to subordinates. I admit that it's tough for those of the perfectionist persuasion.
3. Finally, there are some people who just lose the will to discipline themselves to fly well and to fly often enough to remain proficient. There is a social factor too...everyone is polite to the CO/XO but every airplane ever built is fully prepared to be very rude, indiscreet and very public about its sneers. Sloth is sneaky and its devotees may not be aware that they have lost their edge.

**The Bright Side.** I was very fortunate that I served with flying leaders.

**XO Conducts Meetings--Essential But Potentially Messy.** As XO, I met with Junior Officers of the Day (normally Chiefs) and with the enlisted section leaders to improve station and duty section performance and to keep the junior people advised. We needed rules to keep us on track. Consequently I read the following rules at the beginning of each meeting.

**“Ground Rule One:** This meeting is not to establish station policy. We will talk about things that may improve our procedures and performance. If approved by the CO, they will be announced to everyone at the same time in a Station Notice or Instruction.”

**“Ground Rule Two:** This is not a Request Mast. Bring any personal problems you might have to your section head or to me, but not now.”

**“Final Closing Comment:** We have not made any policy today.”

**Air Story No. 1 & 2.** On the night of 22 October 1966 I got a call to come in because the Motor Vessel **Captayannis S** was aground on Clatsop Spit and in danger of breaking up. It was Coast Guard weather cubed, blowing hard, raining, big breakers on the bar. "Hard aground" does not mean that a vessel

does not "rock and roll" especially when the seas are big and the wind is blowing spray over the funnel. Bob Houvener and I launched in HH-52A 1417 with AE2 Schenk as hoist operator. We picked up four people on each of two flights for a total of eight. The hair on the back of my neck may have stood up a little which does wonderfully focus the mind. I do have one observation. This was a Greek vessel and a Greek crew which as far as I am concerned is a positive. Greek crewman remind me of that song King of the Road where stogies are "short and not too big around". When you get a Greek in the rescue basket and take a strain on the cable, the helicopter hardly notices.

One night at Air Station Astoria, I was the copilot for the CO CAPT Jim Maher in an HH-52. The bar had 50 footers, the wind was blowing hard and the sea was as rough as a cob (exceedingly rough). We hoisted some American tanker men from the David E. Day, aground near the channel upriver from the Columbia River bar. There was a 44' MLB from Cape Disappointment Station on scene and taking a beating from the extremely rough water. During the necessary radio comms, I had recognized the voice of the cox'n, a First Class Bos'n Mate from Cape Disappointment, and I told him to head for home and stop being beaten to death. He said that he'd stay out there until we were safely off the bar. Recalling that conversation still warms my heart.

Kinship indeed.

By the way, American tanker men are not short, they are definitely "big around" and the helicopter leans in the direction of the hoist cable like we had just hooked onto a whale.

I'll take Greeks two-to-one to American tanker men.

One final note on MLB's. Boat cox'ns start more often than not as 20 year old BM3's, an age group not noted for mature judgment. The 44' MLB was the standard boat, but some 36' wooden-hull single-screw boats remained in use for missions other than rough water. A favored "practical joke" by young cox'ns was to put an electronics tech in the glory hole forward, where the first good-sized wave would make the 36 footer pitch violently, doing the tech no good at all and occasionally injuring him. The first injury report that crossed my desk from this sort of tom foolery led to a Group Instruction that if anyone was injured in the glory hole, the cox'n would be charged with prima-facie negligent operation. One must keep the younger ones from harming the less knowledgeable.

**Air Story No. 3.** Fred Patterson, ADC Stout and I picked up a brand new HH-52 1429 from Sikorsky on Long Island NY. We needed VFR conditions to make our test flight and climb to altitude, which we got late in the afternoon of 13 July 1967. We completed the test flight, accepted the aircraft and flew to Syracuse NY, because the Sikorsky area was going to be below Visual Flight minimums in the morning due to fog and smog. We then flew to Milwaukee WI, Bismarck ND, and Missoula Montana on successive days at seven hours of flight time per day, which was also the maximum permitted flight time per day for ferry flights. On the 17th of July we got our weather briefing from one of the FAA persons who had been on Annette with us (his name escapes me 42 years later). We planned to follow a major highway (probably US 12) through the pass at an elevation of five thousand feet and then it was a straight shot to Astoria.

We were approaching the top of the pass with the usual low clouds and light turbulence from the mountains, when we heard a tap-tap-tappitty-tap-tap from time to time coming from the transmission area. Chief Stout tried to pin down the source of the noise but couldn't. I don't like tap-

taps coming from a new helicopter's transmission up in the mountains (it makes me nervous), so we looked around for a place to land. We found a wide open pasture and set down, thereby driving the horses there into spasms...they are not overly bright but we were noisy. We opened up the transmission area and found a small chromate paint brush with a bent metal handle perched with the bend balanced on a rib, marvelously arranged to beat out any tattoo you might like in turbulence. We removed the paint brush and departed, leaving the horses in peace.

We landed at Air Station Astoria after 6.8 hours of flying time for a grand total of 32.2 flight hours (including a test flight) and five days enroute. Was that an HH-52 coast-to coast record using headquarters imposed flight time limits? Who knows? At that time, who cared?

**Transferred.** I became a Commander on 1 July 1967, and that made me bait for most any kind of exec (executive officer) job. After only two years at Astoria Air Station I got a call from the headquarters detailer who said that Guam needed a wonderful person just like me (in other words, a live body of my pay grade). I was miffed...I'd just painted that tall (cubed) house...I did not want to sell a house! I admire the sentiments in the motto, "Don't complain and don't explain," and honor it mostly in the breach. I called Peggy for sympathy. She said that it all sounded wonderful to her and when were we leaving? Some days having an adventure loving spouse is not as rewarding as other days, particularly if one wants some "Po-o-r Bernie!".

I'd have whined with more vigor if I had known that this was the first of three tours of only two years.

### **Coast Guard Activities Guam, Coast Guard Section Marianas 1968-1970**

**Operations.** The Commander Marianas Section (and Air Station CO) was first CAPT W.S. (Bill) Allen and later CAPT Glenn O. Thompson. I was the Deputy Commander and Air Station XO. The station operated two C-123's supporting loran stations on Saipan, Yap and on Anguar, Western Carolines.

The pilots and several general duty officers were mixed together in the Section Office located physically at the hangar on Naval Air Station Agana. We also supported floating and permanent aids to navigation from Truk to Okinawa and had two 180' WLB's for this mission.

**Coast Guard Loran Stations** were remarkably alike and very easy to recognize. I believe the following were headquarters' minimum design criteria for the original loran stations.

1. Normally on a little island a long way from anywhere and where one is never out of sight of the loran antenna (Yap and Saipan were somewhat bigger).
2. The runway normally runs from one side of the island to the other.
3. It's one year of isolated duty, and that loran duty was not regarded as choice.
4. A certain amount of beer drinking was expected and required...judging from the amount of beer

cargo we hauled.

**Air Stories:** I did learn to fly a big fat airplane known as a C-123. The best thing about it was that the Coast Guard version had wonderful electronics including radar. The engines were that old World War II favorite, the R 2800 which my Dad had tested back during the war years and which I had used in the PBM flying boat. It was pretty much downhill after that. When we flew through rain, it leaked so much that passengers had to wear rain coats. It could not handle more than 15 knots of cross wind unless one was an old sea plane driver and the aircraft was light, so that the pilot could advance the downwind throttle and keep the aircraft parallel with the runway heading. It hated turbulence with a passion, at least compared to an HU-16. Finally, it had no autopilot. I was pretty much underwhelmed. I did get to do some different things hauling cargo and Aids to Navigation teams, and I did have one big adventure and two interesting stories.

**No. 1.** The interesting stories come first. On 12 December 1969 Tom Osborne and I took off in C-123B 4358 for a wash and wax job at Sangley Point Naval Air Station, Philippines. The flight took on the order of 10 hours, and we normally climbed to an altitude where the air was fairly cool, about 10,000 feet. The air there is noticeably thinner but no problem...except for smokers. The carbon monoxide in a burning cigarette has the same concentration as at sea level--the oxygen available is lower due to the lower pressure. Carbon monoxide is absorbed preferentially to oxygen by blood at the ratio of 232 to one. In short, while the lower oxygen level is no problem for a red-blooded American boy, it's tough on people who smoke, especially during a flight of ten hours where a serious smoker will smoke a number of cigarettes.

Tom was handling the radios as we approached Sangley, and he was not doing well...he was also very pale. I said, "Tom, you fly...I'll handle the radios". Tom could fly drunk or sober; he just couldn't talk. As we descended, his color started coming back, and he started to talk better. When we started the landing checklist, I took control of the aircraft and let Tom handle the radios. As we were taxiing after landing, he turned to me and said, "Bernie, I was hypoxic!" How true! I didn't even make him buy me a drink for going on an unauthorized high while on duty.

**No. 2.** Marianas Section had wide spread Aids To Navigation (ATON) responsibilities for the Trust Territory of the Pacific (and for US bases in the Philippines and Okinawa), two 180 foot tenders, a buoy depot...and some ATON boats that fit inside the C-123. We had an outage and some construction that needed to be done at Truk (7 - 25 N, 151 - 47 E) -- we loaded the parts and a boat in the C-123 and were on our way. The airfield was rated daylight VFR only but we had lots of daylight after we landed. It will come as no surprise to anybody involved in ATON construction and repair, and in boat operations (and the real world) that there were delays in the schedule. I know that we weren't surprised when it was very dark and well after sunset before we got the boat back and loaded. There wasn't any place to stay overnight and no place to eat. As I recall, we asked the island administrator to park a couple of vehicles on either side of the runway at the far end and took off using landing lights (as aviators older than me sometimes say, "Piece of cake!"). I believe that it was

the first night takeoff at Truk since World War II.

**No. 3.** Slip Connor and I had flown C-123B 4358 to Sangley Point, Philippine Islands for anti-corrosion polishing-and-waxing at the Navy's maintenance facility. The price was a tenth of what it would cost in Guam. On 26 June 1970 we prepared to fly home to Guam, which was about a 10 hour flight. We had a number of ship board officers who had come along as passengers (about eight) to buy carvings and to see the sights. Our weather information consisted of a wind forecast and weather profile which was top-of-the-line for the era (which by today's satellite imagery was pathetic). I wanted to use Yap (9 - 31 N, 138 - 06 E) as an alternate airfield, but the forecasters said we shouldn't because their daily satellite picture relayed from Hawaii showed a big depression there with the usual thunderstorms and all around nastiness.

Takeoff, climb out and the first couple of hours of the flight were normal. We had good fixes using Loran A (now long gone) showing a ground speed that was near our true air speed of 150 knots. At this point we entered clouds, rain and the usual tropical unpleasantness. Our ground speed started dropping, and I kept spinning my little circular slide rule as the lower ground speeds lengthened the flying time to Guam and ate into my fuel reserves. We couldn't get any forecasts by radio that explained our situation. When our ground speed dropped to 90 knots, it was apparent to me that I was going to have what I did not want, a command-at-sea. For our passengers, life was not good. It was dark and therefore scary, the airplane was bouncing around like an aluminum balloon, and to add insult to injury, the airplane was leaking like a sieve, which to ship persons is ominous. They don't like leakers because leakers are sinkers in their world. I looked over my shoulder and saw them sitting there with raincoats on and their caps, and not a smile-in-a-mile. All things considered, I was not all that pleased with the situation either. I had drawn Plan B on my chart before we left Sangley, which was to go to Yap. Slip and I had both spun our circular slide rules until they were in danger of melting with only more bad news. The only explanation for our weather was that the disturbance at Yap had intensified and had headed north. It had in fact become a tropical storm and then Typhoon Ugly Olga.

It was time for us to head south to Yap ( a course of 135 degrees). I declared an emergency to Guam Radio and we then called Yap Loran Station and told them to hotfoot it to the airstrip and put the flare pots out. A flare pot is a very primitive kerosene lamp and in the dark ages of aviation were used to light the edges of runways. They were also used on primitive islands such as Yap. There wasn't any danger we'd miss Yap if the radar was clobbered by thunderstorms because the Loran C station chirped at 10 mega watts and we could manually home on the transmitter.

We broke out of the clouds into beautiful night visual flying conditions. It was so clear that we saw the light from the flare pots when we were 20 miles away from an altitude of 8,000 feet. I attribute the fact that the flare pots were laid so neatly, quickly and properly to the Marianas Section (and Air Station) Ops Officer Dave Irons who had the flare pots on his inspection and his personal checklist. The boys at the Loran Station had done good work. We made an uneventful landing which was the first night landing on Yap since World War II (the jungles on Yap are filled with shot-up Japanese planes).

After we shut down, the passengers got out and I swear they kissed the ground. It was late

but they insisted that if there was a bar on Yap (and there were several) that they take Slip and me out for a few drinks and that we were their guests. It was an offer we couldn't refuse.

Peggy meanwhile hadn't heard a thing, though she had been a little surprised that Jan Irons had dropped in to chit-chat when dropping in wasn't Jan's style. Jan was just making sure that everything was quiet. Peggy didn't hear anything until we were safely on the ground at Yap.

Rear Admiral Bill Schwob once told me that Dave Irons had the best fitness report file that he had ever seen. It was my pleasure to be one of a great many who contributed to it.

The crew was AE1 J.H. Furqueron, AE3 Larry Bonniwell, AT3(?) Gary Erlandson, AM1 C.P. Gouveia and AD3 D.L. Riles. Passengers included LCDR Bill Hewel and LT Larry ----- (see below for the reason that the last name was omitted).

Chief Furqueron recalls this *"I remember the flight well that we did that evening from the Philippines to Guam, via Yap. And I can still picture you guys in the cockpit there with the whizz wheel doing calculations and asking me every few minutes what the fuel state was. Would have been nice to do what we do now and just put the cursor on YAP and then hit enter and get everything there in a nanosecond. Once we got GPS installed in our Dash-8's and Q-400's and then in the C-208 I flew for FedEx I think I almost forgot how to read a chart. But you still had to have situation awareness because every so often the famous statement would pop up, "why the heck did it do that"? or "What's it doing that for". (Note: Chief Furqueron flew as a pilot for over 12,000 hours after retiring from the Coast Guard.)*

*I have a lot of fond memories of flying with "Bernie" as we all called you, but never to your face. You were always CDR Hoyland to me and I look back and appreciate how you treated me. I know in Astoria & Guam as a young single guy I probably gave you doubts, but I respected you and what you had to do & your position.*

*We flew a lot together in Astoria, Guam & Miami, but a certain trip in Guam I remember especially. It was just the normal run down to Yap, Koror, Anguar and back, but when we stopped in Yap on the way back things began to happen. There was a young SN or ET3 leaving Yap for the states and he came out to get aboard the plane. You went into overdrive when you saw him. Cutoff jeans, no hat, T-shirt, flip flops, and hair down to his shoulders. Needless to say, he did not get to Guam that day. You pulled me aside, looked me in the eye, pointed your finger at me and said. Furqueron, this kid is not getting on my plane and I am putting you personally in charge of seeing that he gets squared away. You go to small stores in Guam, get him some clothes, shoes, hat, etc and bring them down on the trip next week and when you come back through Yap, I want you to inspect him and he does not set foot on Guam unless you approve it. You understand...Yes Sir Commander.....*

*Well, the next week when we came back through Yap, I was on the flight and pulled the kid aside along with the Chief from Yap and inspected him. He looked like he just got out of boot camp the day before with oversized jeans and dungaree shirt, and white hat over his ears, but he was ok.*

*Thanks for the memories. My logbooks are back at home in WA, otherwise I could pull up other flights we were on and picture them also".*

I'm sure that the Navy admired our enviable esprit...but Coast Guard uniforms? Judging from the

reports that the navy sent to me as XO, admiration is not the word that I would have used. Our widespread failure to tuck our shirts into our pants in the clubs led to minor disagreements...and charge sheets. It was my duty to suppress the appearance of hooligans. John was apparently very persuasive with the Yap Chief. I confess that, while the Yap CO had many admirable qualities, there was a notable lack of compliance with elementary Coast Guard regulations.

**Human Story Proving That Stupidity Outnumbers Malice Ten to One.** Our administrative officer was a very likable lieutenant and a non-aviator with a great sense of humor (which unfortunately may one day yet get him killed). Unknown to me or the Section Commander, he broke the regulation that says that there shall be “no spurious messages” and concocted a spurious message, allegedly from Headquarters, assigning Dave Irons to Washington DC (illegal, immoral and DUMB!). His aim of course was to drive Dave crazy. He did. Dave was at the height of his flying career and was in no mood to push papers every day, all day long and probably part of the night. He was crushed. Then Larry (last name omitted to protect the guilty) came in to see me, confessed, and sought sanctuary. He said that Dave had gotten used to the idea of Washington orders, was starting to plan positively, and that Larry hadn’t figured out a way to tell Dave that wouldn’t result in his Larry’s very personal demise... and would I or the Section Commander break the news? I went on to assure him that if Dave DID kill him, that it was only because I hadn’t, and that I would personally regard it as justifiable moron-slaughter. I suspect that I developed a pretty good head of steam, mentioning things like “toying with a happy home” and a “very serious breach of regulations” and I might even have mentioned “horrifying judgment”...when one is inspired the words do flow. I told Larry to go to Dave when Dave wasn’t near a fire arm, get down on his knees, beg for mercy and apologize profusely. It worked, though I’m still not sure why either Dave or I didn’t do him great bodily harm.

Larry's death probably would have made one of those Darwinian lists of those who improved the species by doing something both fatal and foolish. I did get even in the rottenest way...he was a passenger on the flight related above through Typhoon Ugly Olga.

## **Air Station Miami 1970-1972**

**Operations.** As executive officer for CAPT Marion (Gus) Schrode and later CAPT Verne (Buzz) Finks, I did the usual paper work but also did a good deal of flying. My log book says that in the HH-52A I recovered some bodies from an offshore crash, delivered some pumps and in the C-123 hauled a lot of cargo and an Admiral or two. I can hardly recall it. One remembers the times when the hair on the back of one's neck stands on end and these apparently did not meet that demanding criteria. I do distinctly recall that from 9 February 1971 to 11 March 1971, I was the senior member of the accident analysis board that investigated the strike damage to HH-52A 1401 at Air Station Elizabeth City, North Carolina. I still can't believe that I was dumb enough to tell Peggy what that rotten swine from headquarters had told me, "You'll be home in a week!" I was afraid that Peggy was never going to forgive me for that one. It didn't help that Peggy was very pregnant too.

**Air Story.** I have one C-123 story for you. We were taxiing out one morning on a logistics flight to one of the Ioran stations. I noticed that the duty runway had a flock of seagulls sitting on the departure end. There are those who believe that seagulls when approached by a plane roaring down a runway will dive into a hole like a rabbit. I am of the opinion that seagulls may fly upwards so that they can meet the airplane. I called ground control and offered to taxi down the runway from the departure end to the approach end and flush all the birds with my wondrously noisy reciprocating engines...the birds would fly and I would stay on the ground where we would not meet. My generous offer was declined. I was waiting on the taxiway behind a propjet lining up for takeoff so I had a good view of the impending stupidity. The propjet roaring down the runway caused terminal uneasiness amongst the seagulls. Contrary to the expectations of some, the seagulls did not dive in holes like rabbits--they flew. There was an unpleasant midair collision between the birds and the propjet's propellers, whereupon the pilot asked permission to land to inspect his airplane. I waited until the airport vehicle cleared the runway of bloody debris. It's hard to believe that people alleged to be professionals can be so dumb. Another Bernie's rule: Stupidity out numbers malice ten to one (and there's lots of malice).

## **Air Station Traverse City Michigan 1972-1975**

**Operations.** There is nothing in life quite like being the boss, and I was the Commanding Officer and a Captain. The XO was CDR E.W. (Ted) Murphy followed by CDR John Hancock. In the community the CO was a big frog in a small pond. The family was a memorable group: ten of us. The flying was a lot like Alaska from November 1 to May 1 in that we had lots of snow and ice, especially the lake effect snow. We had ice patrols in the winter and pollution patrols all year round. I even got to make one night pump delivery.

**Aviation Stories** The last entry in my log book is an HH-52 flight on 7 July 1975 to photo the Sundew and to do something or other for the Cherry Festival. I had pretty routinely taken the flights involving demonstrations or hauling senior people for several reasons. First, they were interesting if inconvenient. Second, I could fly as well as any of the other pilots, had more experience with the missions and I knew the senior people and how they thought. Third, if our senior person proposed something that was dangerous, unwise or merely imprudent, it was much easier for me to say, "I don't think that would be prudent". Finally, if I needed cooperation on the mission, I could get it much easier than any junior pilot. Let me repeat, it's wonderful to be boss.

**Lessons Learned.** Coast Guard aviation has always responded to emergencies extremely well, and we in aviation did a good job of investigating accidents to discover the "lessons learned" (which headquarters promptly published in a short-lived newsletter) for the benefit of those then serving in aviation. The lesson-learned more often than not died after that. For instance, we learned a lot of things about the HU-16 the hard way, through accidents. We then never got around to incorporating those lessons-learned into an addendum to the HU-16 Flight Handbook which could be issued to every new pilot and those re-qualifying. One example I remember very well. About 1962, LCDR

Frank (Pop) Shelley published a solution in the Flight Lines of that day to the problem of identifying a propeller that was placed in reverse by lifting the throttles after landing but in fact had remained in tractor. The technique was to watch the RPM. If the propeller was in idle reverse, the rpm dropped to 600...if it was in tractor it remained at about 1000 rpm. To haul back on the throttles with one propeller in tractor and one prop in reverse led to exhilarating directional control problems that on slippery runways may or may not be controllable with brakes.

I knew and used that technique until I started flying C-123s -- using that technique on the C-123 led to the engines dying embarrassingly and immediately. We HU-16 pilots were very hard to retrain until we got really tired of the engines dying and the instructor snickering...we then pulled the throttles back to 1000 rpm **promptly**. When I re-qualified in the HU-16 at Traverse City I had over 3,000 hours in the HU-16. Unfortunately the only fixed wing I had flown for the past four years was the C-123 (for a total of 942.8 hours) where I had a very well developed habit pattern. There was no reminder of the safe HU-16 reversing technique in 1972 anywhere in the HU-16 directives system and I did not relearn it during requals.

The trap was now set.

I landed one cold winter day on a hard-packed-snow runway at Duluth MN on some mission. One propeller failed to go into reverse. The resulting one-propeller-in-tractor and one-propeller-in-reverse took me harmlessly into a runway snow bank, even though I feathered both of the propellers that were taking me off the runway and used the brakes on that hard-packed snow for all they were worth. It still took me a day to figure out what had happened.

The lesson-learned is that operating instructions must incorporate lessons-learned. A one-time notification of aviation personnel in newsletters is not enough.

**Failing to do so is a failure of management.**

**Air Station Stories.** I had several interesting experiences as Commanding Officer and most of them were not funny enough for me to tell, so perhaps another time. There are a few stories you may enjoy.

**Bad News.** The CO of a Station does not get all the bad news, so that he/she can fix a problem. Stumbling on the problem may be all that can be hoped for... some of the channels in my case were unique.

Peggy phoned me at the station one day and the young man on watch told her that there was no CAPT Hoyland assigned there. When I got home she said that she was surprised to see me because the Station said that I had disappeared...or some other equally snappy comment. There is absolutely no doubt however that I got razed. When I pursued my "disappearance" with the Chief of the Duty Section (probably the Junior Officer of the Day), he said that the young man on telephone watch had reported in the day before and that the Chief was breaking him in to be a duty section watch stander. I agreed that it was an honorable goal but his means was far short of perfection, and that if it had been the District Commander or the Traverse City Manager who had been told that I didn't exist, he would have been the principal at the Station's first tar-and-feathering. There were some fruitful discussions with other seniors in the chain of command in the same vein. The moral of the story for any CO/XO is never to be grumpy when any one tells you the bad news about your station...thank

them!...especially your wife.

I was sitting at my desk one day when a first class petty officer showed up at my door wearing a sign "BOOT CHIEF" (he was being hazed by the other Chiefs upon his prospective promotion to Chief). He also was carrying a shoe shine kit. I thought that it was a bit much of tom-foolery but that this wasn't the time to complain and I might even learn what was actually going on at my station if I listened. The petty officer said it was his assigned duty to give me a shoe shine. We started chatting and I couldn't help noticing that his hands were shaking which was very strange...I asked why. He said that he was being initiated that night by the Chiefs and that the initiation involved drinking a lot of booze such as vodka. He didn't drink, thought that it was morally wrong and that he had lined up a bunk in the barracks since after-wards he would not be capable of driving and might not be capable of walking. This was well worth investigating personally. I got an invitation...it was not a pretty sight. The master of ceremonies filled a pitcher with a mix of vodka and grape juice and told the boot chief to drink it...he wisely spilled most of it. I invited the Leading Chief to my office to discuss this next morning. The gist of the conversation was that minor hazing was acceptable to me, but that risky boozing was not; that the Commandant of the Coast Guard and I designated Chiefs, that it was an honor that should not be desecrated by ill-advised bar room squid-like behavior (duty with navy types did not always bring out the best behavior in our people). I wonder if that ruling survived my leaving as CO. I confess to being a spoil sport about some things.

**Hung Over Pilot.** An experienced headquarters aviator with the rank of Commander had come to the Air Station to get some HH-52 training time. We normally assigned a copilot to ride with the senior person to coordinate the details of local area flying rules. On this morning, the Commander looked considerably the worse for wear, so I got within smelling distance. My nose was apparently expecting the worst because it said, "Warning! Reject! Warning! Reject!". You all know how noses can go berserk so I discounted part of it, and asked the Commander how he felt. He said, "Fine! Why do you ask?" I didn't tell him that my nose had panicked, but I wasn't wholly graceful either, because I said (honest!), "You smell like a distillery. I'm going to assign one of my aircraft commanders as pilot in command. You can do training subject to his review." One doesn't often have to tell a peer that he has to shape up or expect consequences. On the other hand, he was a very experienced drinker. I've told you before that I'm rotten to the core and maybe deeper. My rotten streak said that it seemed only right that he suffer the slings and arrows of a hangover while an experienced pilot watched the helicopter try to make a fool of him. To my undying shame, I thought that all was right with my world.

**Leadership by Chiefs.** I thought that the Chiefs didn't have enough incentive to handle the ordinary problems of their people. I called them together and explained my approach to UCMJ Article 15 Non-judicial Punishment (commonly called "masts" in the Coast Guard).

1. I didn't want to see anyone at mast unless the Chief needed to get the attention of that person.
2. I would make a good and fair judgment if the Chief told me at mast the exact problem with no white-washing. Plain, honest talk was essential.
3. People who were found guilty at mast could expect that it would cost \$100 to walk into my

office (this was big money in 1972). I was not a big believer in restriction which was a nuisance for the duty section and a temptation to the restrictee. Making the guilty person too poor to party was a better idea.

4. The Chiefs were welcome to invite any person needing guidance to perform voluntary extra instruction in lieu of facing a Captain who was not wishy-washy.

The chiefs seemed receptive and the exec didn't mind either...masts are a nuisance. I've always felt that strong Chiefs make a happy Station.

**One Stealth Story (confessions of a sneaky CO).** Station personnel knew that I most emphatically required haircuts that met Headquarters' policy...which I thought were much too short for our community and for the times. We looked odd. The bachelors had a very hard time looking good to the local ladies...they looked more like convicts. *The years following Vietnam were not kind to a military appearance.*

I wrote a letter to the Commandant saying so. It was a "stealth letter" because the Chief Yeoman typed it (he was sworn to secrecy) and the only file copies were in the CO's and XO's personal files. It was much simpler to manage the appearance of haircuts if no one thought that the CO disapproved of the short standard; a little shakiness at the top leads to wide spread big-time shakiness (and non-enforcement of standards) at the bottom by junior leaders.

Years later at a Ptero Gathering, the XO CDR John Hancock gave me a big smile when the former station administrative officer commented to us that he knew what a stickler I had been for very short haircuts...it was John's and my little secret.

**The Maverick Pilot.** The Senior Chief told me at one of our once-a-month meetings that one of the pilots was inducing nervous pangs in the enlisted flight crew; I asked the Operations Officer (who was probably a little too nice a guy for my good) to look into it. He reported that the passed-over-for-promotion Lieutenant was indeed a pilot who had written his own Flight Manual, who loved to fly exceedingly low and had a couple of flight maneuvers that chilled the blood.

I invited the miscreant into my office along with the Ops Officer, and asked him about these reports. He did a lot of waffling but no confessions or apologies, which was about what I expected. I told him that his aircraft commander's designation was suspended for a month and that he would only fly as copilot. That after a month I'd review the Operation's Officer's reports and recommendations. We valued experienced pilots but we demanded full compliance with our flight standards. It was up to him to prove to us that he was trustworthy. If I decided that he wasn't, he'd be a permanent copilot until he was retired after 20 years of service. As I recall, he gave up most of his flying bad habits but continued to talk about his techniques to anybody that would listen. Most of the junior folk fortunately wouldn't listen.

He got his Aircraft Commander designation back, more because I didn't want to see him humiliated than because I trusted him. He did know that nobody junior was going to put up with his nonsense and that I certainly wasn't.

## **Sitrep One and Final: Genesis of the Bernie Book**

( This was originally published in the Coast Guard Academy's alumni bulletin, December 1992)

*I've been told that there are 800 Coast Guard aviators, all of whom have a Bernie Book. My guess is that very few of them know how the Bernie Books got started. There are probably some old fuds winning bar bets with tricky trivia questions about some Johnny-Appleseed-of-SAR-Procedures booklets. While I have no true objection to a peer cadging drinks, the following should squelch any more unjust exploitation of young studs.*

*In 1961 I started my third aviation tour flying HU-16s at Coast Guard Air Station San Francisco. I had always had a morbid fear of dying in an avalanche of operational books in an Albatross' cockpit. The glare shield simply wasn't strong enough to carry the contents of two leather bags full of pubs. Consequently, I had made a personal SAR booklet to cover the urgent operational problems that might arise, such as how to assist a C-124 during a night ditching. There were many C-130 pilots but only two of us lieutenants who flew instructional and check flights in HU-16s. Lucky Gene Baumann had influence with the scheduler, and I got to fly an aircraft commander check with a superb airman who was just a bit fuzzy on SAR procedures. He got an "extra time" ( a gentlemen's down). I complained to the Operations Officer about our obvious system failure. The Commanding Officer had borrowed my booklet for some Rotary affair, so my secret booklet was known to operations and to the CO. I won't bore you with the details. We published CGAS San Francisco SAR procedures in June 1963.*

*I started my fourth aviation tour as a lieutenant commander in 1963 at Coast Guard Air Station Miami at Dinner Key, known as the "busiest Air Sea Rescue Station in the world". There wasn't a copilot there who couldn't draft a sitrep in his sleep. Nevertheless, Captain Jim Dillian thought we could be better, and we published a CGAS Miami SAR Procedures book. The first time I heard it called a "Bernie Book" was by Lieutenant Jim Mitts (later Captain Jim Mitts).*

*In 1967 we published "CGAS Astoria SAR Procedures". Tours on Guam and back at CGAS Miami at Opalocka followed. The final "Bernie Book" was published at CGAS Traverse City in 1973.*

*After I retired in 1983 I would occasionally get a note or hear a story about Bernie Books. Ptero Captain George Kriemeyer enjoyed the stories as much as I did, and I suspect him of coaching the CO of Aviation Training Center Mobile, CAPT Herr (now VADM). In any case he approached me about providing an original Bernie Book for a trivia display on Coast Guard aviation. I'm embarrassed to say that I said no. The very thought of searching for an obscure carton of books in my boiling hot attic robbed me of both graciousness and courage. A couple of years later, on an unusually cold New Orleans winter day, I stumbled (literally) across a box of books in my attic. At the next National*

*Gathering of the Ancient Order of Pterodactyls, I trapped a new CO of Avtracen Mobile, CAPT Peter A. Poerschke and reported that I had a beat up artifact of very questionable worth whose sole claim to fame was that it was beyond doubt a genuine, original Bernie Book. He was much more gracious and receptive than I had been. Which is how in March 1992, Coast Guard Aviation Training Center Mobile dedicated a shadow box containing some Bernie Book memorabilia.*

## **The End...And About Time!**

From my Coast Guard service I have observed that flying airplanes teaches one humility...normally. Nothing has taught me patience, though Peggy (bless her!) is still trying to teach me both patience and a modicum of driving skill. I have learned an admirable ability to ignore (read: bite my tongue). I can understand why some of my children flinched while driving with her as passenger in the past, though lately I have seen her show restraint under provocation that I truly envy--I'm always putting on the brakes while riding shotgun. Is it possible that her training of me is bearing fruit? No-o-o-o...couldn't be.

For my part, retired in central Florida, I am still amazed when I get close enough to see the driver of a car who seems to be a perfectly normal person, when from afar and judging only from their driving skill, I had supposed them to be nine-armed, three-headed aliens from a very dark region of outer space.

**Thanks for taking the time to read this story.**

*By the time Captain Hoyland retired in 1983 after 30 year's service, he had conducted a number of Coast Guard aviation and vessel mishap investigations, from minor incidents to accidents. Until final age-related retirement, he worked at Stennis Space Center and the Strategic Petroleum Reserve in safety analysis, developing procedures and requirements and writing manuals, where he also analyzed incidents and accidents. He is an experienced aircraft mishap analyst and a past Commanding Officer of a Coast Guard Air Station.*