



Aviation Maintenance Duty Officer ASSOCIATION Newsletter

Number Thirty

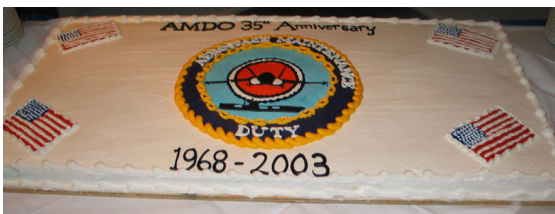
Summer 2008

AMDO 40th Birthday Symposium Coming in October

Capt Mike Kelly, CO FRC SW, and retired Capt Pete Laszcz are heading the committee organizing the AMDO community's 40th birthday symposium. Current plans are to hold the event over two days (either 2 and 3 October, or 6 and 7 October) in the San Diego area in conjunction with this year's Miramar Air Show weekend. The dates the committee selects are contingent on which hotel ends up making the best offer.

Current plans are for a two-day professional symposium with speakers and exhibits from companies associated with aviation maintenance. Additionally, there will be social events at various locations (the Aerospace Museum, the Midway, the Miramar Air Show, etc).

Any AMDO, active or retired, interested in brainstorming event ideas or helping on the committee is asked to email either Capt Kelly (michael.a.kelly3@navy.mil) or Capt Laszcz (pjl3@cox.net).



If you weren't there in 2003 for a bite of the community's 35th birthday cake, be sure to attend this fall and have a taste of the community's 40th birthday cake.

Watch www.amdo.org for more AMDO community 40th birthday symposium info.

Featured Articles

Being an AIMDO in the Shipyard	Steve Crawmer
Sirens of the Sea	Eric Dean
A Virginia Monologue	Ken Marks
Carrier Readiness Team	Steve Crawmer
How I Completed My Doctoral Program ...	Shawn Hankins

<http://www.amdo.org>

Make it a matter of routine to check the AMDO Association Web Site daily. We're always adding information and articles of interest to the community. Here's what you'll find:

- Breaking news of interest
- Selection board results as soon as they are released
- E-mail addresses for hundreds of AMDOs, plus our aviation LDO and CWO brethren (*Check yours and make sure its up-to-date*)
- ALNAVs of interest to AMDOs
- AMDO Photo Gallery for your entertainment
- The Aviation Maintenance Encyclopedia
- ...and much, much more

Check it daily!

Is It Membership Renewal Time??

Check the mailing label on your Newsletter. If the membership expiration date above your name is **June 2008** or prior, please renew now. Send your renewal check (\$10 or \$20) to the AMDO Association at the address on the back cover OR you can renew with your plastic via PayPal at www.amdo.org/members.html. While you're at it, update us on your phone numbers and e-mail addresses as well as what you've been doing lately. *Thanks!*

We do send e-mails to remind you when renewal is due, but keeping ahead of the game is truly appreciated.



Community News: Congrats to our Selectees

- ☆ Congrats to the following FY09 Active Duty Captain selectees

Jon Albright	Chris Kennedy	Art Pruett
John Smajdek	Neil Williams	Mike Zarkowski

- ☆ Congrats to the following FY09 USNR Captain selectees

FTS: John Pasch			
1525: David Harach	William T. Little	Mark Maxwell	Patrick Mulcahy

- ☆ Congrats to the following FY09 Active Duty Commander selectees:

Allen Blaxton	Kenneth Brown	Gerald Cook
Chris Couch	Duane Decker	Christopher Hammond
Mike McCurdy	Mark Nieto	Jeff Pronesti
Dave Spencer	Joel Tessier	

- ☆ Here are the forthcoming AIMDO slates:

CDR Fitz Britton - FRC Norfolk	CDR(sel) Russ Dickison - USS NIMITZ
CDR(sel) Bryant Hepstall - USS JOHN C STENNIS	CDR(sel) Craig Owen - USS CARL VINSON
CDR Gene Santiago - USS GEORGE WASHINGTON	CDR(sel) Nate Schneider - USS RONALD REAGAN
CDR Eric Simon - FRC Pt Mugu	CDR(sel) John Zrembski - CMO ELEVEN Jax

- ☆ Congrats to the following AMDOs on their selection for the Acquisition Corps:

Linn Beal	Paul Choate	Rich Fairchild	Arsenio Francisco
Grant Gorton	Curtis Michel	Chris Sacco	

- ☆ Congrats to the following selectees from the FY08 Acquisition Command Screening Panel:

<u>Captains:</u>	Rob Caldwell	Fred Hepler	Rich Lorentzen
	Fred Melnick	Ellen Moore	
<u>Commanders:</u>	Russ Dickison	Kate Erb	John Farwell
	Dave Ferreira	Rusty Medford	Matt Mullins
	Carl Nolte	Craig Owen	Nate Schneider
	Eric Simon	John Zrembski	

- ☆ Acquisition Command slating results:

DCMA, Pamldale, CA – Ellen Moore	FRC SW, North Island, CA – Fred Melnick
FRC SE, Jacksonville, FL – Rob Caldwell	

More AMDOs In The News

† Retired AMDO Captain Larry Gallion, YG 57, one of the original 100 AMDOs, passed away on 13 March. A service was held at Arlington National Cemetery on 20 March.

† Former AMDO Craig Smith, YG 82, of Marietta, GA died in January.

✓ Congrats to John Kemna, AIMDO FRC West (Lemoore), for winning the 2007 **Virg Lemmon Award**.

✓ Ray Bednarcik will give a **10% discount to any Greenshirt** at his Brewster's Ice Cream store in Hollywood, MD. Just identify yourself to the clerk as a Greenshirt.



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

YG 52

Don Walker got to take a VIP tour of USS Eisenhower last summer and was impressed with the light years of progress he saw. He and Betty are still enjoying retirement at Lake Monticello in beautiful central Virginia.

YG 63

Donna and **Fred Wiggins** just returned from a cruise to San Juan, St Maartin and St Thomas aboard Royal Caribbean, Mariner of the Seas. They loved it and are already planning a trip through the Panama Canal on Holland America with some members of their church.

YG 64

Mike Brannon reports that he's staying busy with four riding horses, four dogs and one cat, and occasionally makes it from his home in Caliente to the monthly greenshirt luncheon at North Island.

Bob Hunter has been spending time with the docs trying to decode his mystery pains. The docs at Johns Hopkins have eliminated myasthenia gravis but are still searching. To top it off, Bob is dealing with a torn rotator cuff via physical therapy. We wish him all the best.

YG 65

Kathy and **Norm Blinn** returned from their four-month Intra-coastal Waterway trip on March 20 having covered almost 2,400 nautical miles. If you care to read about the trip, check Norm's blog: <http://ebbtidelog.blogspot.com>.

YG 68

Ward Masden left CACI at the end of January and is now with Booz Allen Hamilton doing the exact same Critical Infrastructure Protection (CIP) support but for the Army instead of the Navy. Ward is moving back to the Tidewater area. His youngest daughter, Dr. Jenny Reed, is now the Director of Surgery at the Leigh Memorial Hospital Breast Center in Norfolk, VA. **John Mokodean** works two floors above Ward at the Booz

Tyson's Corner office. Although **Bob Moeller** is in the Booz Allen San Diego office, he and Ward visits when Bob returns once a month to the Tysons office for business.

In January, Kathy and **Dave Mozgala** took a 2-week+ trip/cruise to New Zealand and Australia. When not seeing the world, Dave volunteers in the local soup kitchen, and is a starter at his golf course where golfing remains a passion with both Mozgalas. They have signed up to go on a European river cruise in September. They will fly to Budapest, and end up 2 weeks later in Amsterdam.

Bob Munsey is making progress helping with the aircraft restoration projects at the Titusville Valiant Air Command Warbird museum. He says that the props are on the C-47, the cowl flaps have been assembled and are operative, new tires have been installed, and they are just weeks away from taxi test time. They have also located the crew members who flew the aircraft on D-Day. Bob is busy pulling the inspection plates off the TBM in preparation to start wiring. Bob says he's "still having fun 'playing airplanes'."

YG 69

After being happily single for the last 14 years, **Jerry Branum** says that he has fallen big-time for the most wonderful lady, Wanda McNeil. They are both semi-retired, spending much more time traveling overseas and enjoying their home than working. They prefer the adventure travel route while they still have good legs, visiting Peru, Ecuador, Galapagos Islands and Costa Rica this last year. Wanda is involved in several political, economic and legal organizations while Jerry keeps current with his landscape design gig by taking apart and putting back together their mountain top homesite next to a nature preserve. In-conus trips usually involve visits to their combined five adult children and six grandkids. Jerry says "life continues to hover around great".

Marty Reagan and his VSO Nancy just returned from a great Alaska cruise with Royal Caribbean.

Dr. Phil Smiley has recovered well from his ankle surgery in February and is working hard in his instrument instructor rating.



YG 71

Congrats to **Sonny Sauls** on his move SC and marriage in February.

Tom Yee is president of Navy Federal Credit Union's Financial Group.

YG 72

Ann and **Tom Jacobs** are continuing to globe trot. Their last trip was three weeks touring Russia and the trip before that hit seven countries of the old European eastern bloc. China may be next on their list.

YG 73

Kevin Myette changed jobs last year and is now working for a wholly owned subsidiary of BCBS of Florida called First Coast Service Options. Kevin is the Director of Human Resources for a 1200 employee company that processes all the Florida Medicare Claims, and provides Audit Services and Enrollment Services (doctors who want to take Medicare). The Myettes still live at the beach in St. Augustine and get to see E-2s and EA-6Bs fly over once or twice a week from the Grumman plant. Kevin and Kiwi have two grandsons now. Kevin says he'll continue to work for about five more years and then become a Professional Poker Player.

Bob Ruthazer is staying plenty busy running the non-profit First Things First of Greater Richmond. Check out their web site at www.firstthingsrichmond.org

YG 74

Jerry Derrick retired from his second-career job at DCMA HQ and plans to relocate to the Charlottesville area to be near his and Connie's two kids and seven grandchildren. Their first stop will be this Spring/Summer for about a year in Richmond, then part of a new church plant in Charlottesville. The Derrick's Son-in-Law, Ken, will be pastoring, and their Son, Shawn, is already part of a business expansion into Richmond and Charlottesville.

In addition to keeping busy fixing things since he retired, **Rod Rancik** has joined the San Diego County Sheriff's Senior Volunteers.

Rick Trayner is still enjoying his Wyle position as VP, Sustainment Engineering and Jacksonville Site Manager, and will celebrate his 10 year anniversary in the same company. His 170 person operating unit is comprised of

the Orange Park, San Diego, and Cherry Point offices. Rick and Mary Lee spent two weeks in their timeshare condo in Hilton Head this spring and are looking forward to enjoying an Alaskan Cruise in the fall. Rick is in his final year serving as the Chairman of the Clay County Salvation Army Advisory Council, and is an active Rotarian serving as co-chairman of the local Honor Air Project sending WWII Veterans to the WWII Memorial free of charge.

YG 75

Jim Martin spent two weeks in Iraq just before Christmas supporting the Army's Rapid Equipping Force for which he's a senior logistics manager at Ft Belvoir.

Although **Randy Weakley** is the Managing Director, Aircraft Technical Data Systems at FedEx in Memphis, he really spends his time thinking about building that dream house on his lot on the Tennessee River.

YG 77

Mike Hardee retired on 1 May and headed west.

Don Krentz continues to work for InnovaSystems International as the Aviation Integrated Project Management Officer where he supports the SHARP, CV-SHARP, and AMSRR projects for Commander Naval Air Forces. When they have the chance, he and his wife enjoy traveling. "Life is good!", Don says.

John Woodburn retired from the government and is building a house on a waterfront lot on Lake Norman in NC (about 15 miles north of Charlotte). John says he intends to relax some at first and then may get involved in some part-time teaching at the local Junior College. John's NAVSEA calibration PM job has been taken over by **Denny Williams**.

YG 78

John Boyce is the Vice President for Product Support and Procurement at AgustaWestlandBell in Reston, VA.

Ted Miller says that things are VERY busy in Charlottesville. The Observatory is getting a lot of visibility courtesy of audits and reviews, and his team is scrambling to generate the needed exhibits/reports. Ted has made a couple of trips to Chile recently to work with his European and Chilean counterparts on the ALMA project. They are finally at the phase where telescopes are being delivered and assembled at the low site. The high site at 16,000 feet is progressing well, although



there is a lot of utilities work left to be done along with laying in all the telescope pads.

YG 79

David Beck is Manager of F404/F414 Product Development for GE Aviation in Lynn, MA.

YG 80

Erich Blunt decided to retire again. His wife Nancy retired from the Navy after 22 years as a Nurse Practitioner. They bought a 40' Winnebago and plan on doing some travel when Nancy can get away from her new job at the Health Center in Marion County, Ocala, Fl. Erich says he is looking at going back to school to fill in the time blanks between trips.

Dennis Christensen is working for Andromeda Systems Inc., a SDVOSB, as Senior Acquisition Logistics Manager.

Fred Cleveland retired and took a position with American Airlines as Vice President, Base Maintenance to oversee American's three maintenance bases in Tulsa, Okla., Fort Worth, and Kansas City, Mo. In his new position, Derf oversees all maintenance, repair and overhaul activities at American's three aircraft and engine bases where more than 9,000 employees work. He is based in Tulsa.

Carolyn and **Eric Dean** had a very nice road trip up north last fall. The round robin included stops at Sagamore Hill on Long Island, Saratoga Springs, Fort Ticonderoga, Quebec City, Niagra Falls, and Gettysburg. Eric will retire this fall and is currently in the job search mode.

Mike "Shoe" Mellor is GDIT's Project Manager for the Raytheon's STANDARD Missile Program at the Navy TechRep Office in Tucson.

YG 81

Shawn Hankins was awarded his Ed. D. from Nebraska in December. In addition, he was promoted to Head of the Protection, Measurements and Weapons Effects Branch (Z12) at NSWC Dahlgren Division.

Gene Santiago is finishing his tour as Fleet Maintenance Officer for COMUSNAVEUR-COM SIXTHFLT and will be heading off to be AIMDO of USS George Washington.

Dr. Ken Woolman is now working for Lockheed Martin in Orlando where he is a LM Fellow and Senior Human Performance Architect.

YG 83

Theresa Braymer is still working as a consultant with a small company called SM&A leading proposal volume writing efforts for government contractors. She says that she has worked a number of interesting proposals for the services and NASA, including Army's Light Utility Helicopter, the Joint Cargo Aircraft, USAF's GPS, NAVAIR's UCAS-D, avionics for NASA's shuttle follow-on, and a radar system for the Army's Future Combat System. She's on the road a lot, but when not on assignment she enjoys Colorado living with skiing, Broncos, Rockies (NL Champs) and friends from college.

YG 84

Doug Killey is PCSing to DAU at Ft. Belvoir to the one AMDO billet there. **Rich Lorentzen** took Doug's position at OPNAV N881.

YG 85

The AMDO Association welcomes into membership **Bob Worringer**, the NAVAIR Reserve Representative and Reserve Program Manager (AIR-7.3.5).

Jerry Zumbro reports that "life is good". Jerry is the CLF Maintenance Figure of Merit (MFOM) Deputy Program Manager and is working on a software tool that will provide ship near real-time equipment material readiness, screening and brokering of shipyard work packages and readiness to \$\$\$. His office just created a new CASREP program that rolled out in April. Jerry still does some aviation maintenance and provides Fleet fuel and aviation certification waivers. He also sits on the NAMP working committee. Jerry works with DASN, OSD, Coast Guard, NECC, SPAWAR, NNWC and MSC for several smaller programs. He still lives in NC and drives to the CINCLANTFLT Compound.

YG 86

Rob Caldwell moved to Pax River where he is the Production Officer at COMFRC, relieving Gordy Coward. Laura still moderates the AMDO real estate blog.



Rich Lorentzen completed his tour as CO, NATEC and relieved **Doug Killey** as OPNAV N881B in late May.

Carolynn Snyder changed jobs and is Senior Manager, Planning & Production Control at M7 Aerospace in San Antonio.

Greg Stanley is retiring 10 June.

YG 87

Ron Kaelber is back in OPNAV after his year-long IA in Iraq.

YG 88

Cliff Burnette, serving in NASC 0766 (Joint Combat Assessment Team), works for the Virginia Department of Aviation as Director of the Airport Services Division.

Faron Cordrey is currently the Deputy Logistics Officer/Comptroller assigned to COMFAIRWESTPAC, Atsugi, Japan. Faron says that he absolutely loves his job, and is really blessed to have the opportunity to continue to work with so many great USN/USMC young men and women as an USCS employee.

Bart Grossman is now working for Rockwell Collins in Iowa as Project Manager for the US Service Center section of Rockwell Collins Services.

YG 90

Mike Russo now works for Professional Aviation Consultants.

YG 91

The AMDO Association welcomes into membership **Jo Ann McCabe** who works at Engineering and Professional Services, Inc, a government security contractor in Sterling, VA.

YG 92

The AMDO Association welcomes into membership **Warren Crouch**, OIC of FRC MA at NAF Washington DC.

Mark Dover left NATEC to assume command of the newly-established Consolidated Maintenance Organization TWO (CMO-2) in Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii in March. The mission of CMO-2 is to provide Ready for Tasking aircraft and qualified maintenance teams capable of supporting Maritime Patrol and

Reconnaissance operations and training objectives worldwide. Mark has about 600 personnel and 24 aircraft. The other two CMOs are CMO-10 NAS Whidbey and CMO-11 NAS Jacksonville. Mark's command reports to CPRW-2 located in Kaneohe Bay, HI. Mark says "this is a great opportunity for our community to be able to wear the command pin and lead a large organization of over 600 personnel."

YG 94

Angel Bellido is assigned to CNAF East as the Assistant Carrier Strike Group Readiness Officer and is having a great time taking care of the logistics needs of the carriers and the air wings.

Ty Gorrick is assigned to Combined Joint Task Force-82 at Bagram Air Base Afghanistan currently serving with the 82nd Airborne Division as a Future Operations Planner. Ty says that they coordinate efforts with their NATO/International Security Assistance Forces partners that hail from countries such as Italy, Lithuania, Germany, Turkey, UK, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Spain, France, Egypt and many more. The job is very varied and expansive, but Ty thinks it's making a difference for the mission and directly affects the efforts of the Afghan nation-building effort.

The AMDO Association welcomes into membership **Scott Russell**, OPNAV N814, the aircraft readiness analyst for all afloat readiness.

Dave Spencer is on IA in Iraq as the Commander's Emergency Response Program Budget Officer for CENTCOM.

YG 95

Rick Braunbeck is the AMO aboard USS TR.

Rex Burkett graduated from NPS and is now the MO aboard USS Peleliu, LHA-5, and says he'll be taking a couple thousand of his Marine friends to the war zone this summer.

The AMDO Association welcomes into membership **Eric Holsti**, N421 at COMNAVRESFORCOM in New Orleans as the VR/VP Engine and Support Equipment Class Desk Maintenance Officer for the Reserve TYCOM, managing the C-130, C-9, C-40, C-12, C-20, UC-35, C-37, and P-3 platforms as well as the engine and support equipment requirements for the Reserves.

Wes Joshway just finished up his IM1 tour aboard USS Harry S. Truman and is now the



COMHELSEACOMBATWINGLANT Maintenance Officer.

The AMDO Association welcomes into membership **Steve Padron**, the MMCO at FRC SW.

YG 96

Barbara Bauer-Chen got married, graduated from NPS last winter, and is now the C-130 APML in Pax River.

Flash Gorton is now the CVW-2 CAGMO.

Cory Rosenberger completed his Master's of Engineering Management at ODU in May and reported to TR for his IM-1/O-4 sea tour.

YG 97

Lane Cummins is now the aviation requirements officer at the Navy Manpower Analysis Center (NAVMAC) in Millington.

Wes Henrie retired from AIMD Whidbey in March.

Jeff Pizanti is a stay-at-home Dad and LCDR Reservist who is now the Unit OIC for the Deployable Ammunition Reporting Team One (DART 1) drilling in Charleston SC.

The AMDO Association welcomes into membership **Rod Simon** working O-Level maintenance process improvement for CNAF in San Diego.

YG 98

BJ Joaquin is now the MMCO in HM-14.

Mike Wagner completed his tour aboard USS Ronald Reagan and is the T-45, AV-8 & RTCASS Program Integrator at DCMA Boeing St Louis. He's currently on IA as Operations Officer at Defense Contract Management Agency, Bagram Air Base, Afghanistan until September

The AMDO Association welcomes into membership **Darren Wright**, assigned to NAVAIR PMA280, on IA at COB Adler, Iraq as the field site lead for WARLOCK shop. WARLOCK is the family name for the collection of Army electronic warfare systems. CREW (Counter Radio controlled IED Warfare) utilizes both WARLOCK and CHANNEL (Navy Electronic Warfare Systems). Darren is the site lead for a WARLOCK Maintenance

Facility in Alder where his team maintains and installs a few of the WARLOCK systems in all types of Army vehicles.

YG 99

Vic Allende is the MO at FRC West site Fallon.

Francini Clemmons graduated from NPS and is now IM-1 aboard USS Enterprise.

Holly Falconieri graduated from NPS and is now working Aviation/OOMA Requirements at PEO C4I, PMW-150 in San Diego.

YG 00

Jeff Brown is the QAO at FRC Mid-Atlantic.

YG 01

Randy Berti is now IM-2 officer aboard USS Harry S. Truman.

Steve Holland is the Production Officer at NAPRA in Atsugi.

The AMDO Association welcomes into membership **Mike Windom**, VRC-40 Det 5 Maintenance Officer.

Kelly Ann Varonfakis completed her tour in HSC-84 and is now in VR-54 in New Orleans.

YG 02

Mike Dadagan is now the QAO aboard USS Ronald Reagan.

Joseph Kamara is now at FRC SE Site Jacksonville.

The AMDO Association welcomes into membership **Dan Reid**, the MMCO in HSL-60.

YG 04

Mark Logan has checked into VAQ-133 as the Material Control Officer.

YG 05

Linc Endecott is the MCO in VFA-136 at Oceana.

YG 07



The AMDO Association welcomes into membership **Stephanie Lins**, the Material Control Officer in VFA-143.

The AMDO Association welcomes into membership **James Willoughby**, a reservist who earned his commission last fall after years of service with VR-59. His day job is as an engine trend monitoring analyst with Cessna in Wichita.

The AMDO Association welcomes into membership **Joey Yang**, the Material Control officer in VAQ-131.

YG 08

The AMDO Association welcomes into membership **Brian McKee**, the MMCO in VFC-12.

The AMDO Association welcomes into membership **Dan Stimson**, the MCO and QAO in VFA-115.

Didn't see your own news here? Just send an update to newsletter@amdo.org.

Featured Articles

A Once In A Lifetime Experience - Being An AIMD Officer In The Shipyards

BY CDR STEVE CRAWMER ('92)

When you're selected for a Major AIMD and then chosen to be banked, feelings of elation can quickly become suspicious feelings of mild mannered rejection, especially when you are a realist. I didn't say pessimist. My wife Kim says I'm a pessimist. I call it realism – the art of understanding what will happen when and if things go wrong. That's my definition at least.

In this case nothing went wrong, except that I didn't get a ship equipped with all the bells and whistles; a full cycle of at sea periods, and a deployment where lots and lots of people and systems are employed; nor one with all the benches installed, a full-up roster of smart people with the right qualifications to operate the equipment necessary to make RFI aircraft components turned into Supply as failed.

After being in a shipyard myself now for over 18 months, I wouldn't say anything is easy. Certainly not easy during a shipyard period where an aircraft carrier is completely overhauled. Something called a Refueling and Complex Overhaul (RCOH). Planned to take 40 months, USS CARL VINSON is nearing the final lap and will complete on time and on budget. Likely a first for the third similar overhaul completed first in USS NIMITZ (CVN 68) and then in USS EISENHOWER (CVN 69).

I didn't know what to think when the detailer called and told me about the opportunity. I mentioned earlier I had been banked. Banked means selected but now held for a later billet. Just after the Major AIMD Officer slate was announced, the Navy made a decision to decommission USS JOHN F KENNEDY. The decision to de-com KENNEDY drove the decision to not replace the AIMD Officer, meaning one of us would wait for the next years ship slots. One of the selects from my year group would have to wait to get their shot at running a big AIMD. That person turned out to be, you guessed it, yours truly.

My opportunity came earlier than anticipated. The CARL VINSON position it appeared was made available earlier than originally anticipated. After considering for about two seconds, I said "absolutely yes". How do you say no to a Major AIMD? Of course many thoughts were racing through my mind. The shipyards? I don't know that I want that..... I *know* I *don't* want that!!!! Another few moments passed and I said "yes" again. Where'd that come from? What's a fellow to do? I wasn't the only guy assigned to the ship. Likely there are another 3,000 people onboard, some of whom did not really want an extended yard assignment either. Can you say no to this assignment? Don't think so. I did sigh a time or two. Detailer probably told me why it would be good. In fact I had quite a few people calling me with congratulations also telling me why it would be good. To one of the last I remarked....If it is not going to hurt, why do so many have to tell me so? Bottom line, shipyard or not, being this ship's AIMD Officer has been a great opportunity.

Here I am and let me tell you, there's quite an extensive list of things you don't get to do during an RCOH. The list of things you *do* get to do is quite extensive as well. Being a leader and working hard is at the top of the list.



We view some of our work in AIMD as a farmer might view raising crops. Having three facets to raising a crop: planting, tending and harvesting, he looks at each as equally important. Harvesting may be the most rewarding. Planting and tending are just as important. We are “re-habbing” every single space in the ship. The electronic benches were removed a few years ago, before my watch.

Some of the benches have been sent to rework. Some were transferred to other places. All will be re-installed soon. The spaces, the shops that will be home to these benches, are all in various stages of rehabilitation. Basically every space on this ship is being un-done and re-done. Work spaces, living spaces, voids and passageways. Helmets on, sleeves rolled down. In most cases, painting and decking. Decking, decking, and more decking.

Some new furniture, new bulls-eyes, placards. Paint schemes, borders and bulkheads, LAN drops, new wiring, cable trunks, flat screen televisions. Newly upholstered ready room chairs. Did I mention that our parachute riggers do lots of that stuff, as does everyone else in Ship’s Force? AIMD owns the non-tight door team. You guessed it. We have expertly removed, refurbished and are now re-installing nearly 1750 doors throughout the ship, which includes more information about the locks and key lock schemes than I’m qualified to mention. The door team is primarily our IM-4 professionals. I am convinced that CARL VINSON Support Equipment Technicians can do just about anything, including overhauling lots of support equipment. I’d have to say we are in the planting stage.

What is not remarkable about this tour is that the AIMD professionals; Officers, Chief Petty Officers and without a doubt the Petty Officers and Airmen, are doing these tasks to the best of their ability and with significant pride. And it shows every day. It shows in the way they have overhauled support equipment under their charge. It shows in the way they’ve refurbished doors and ready service lockers, re-habbed spaces and passageways, presented zones for zone inspections, stood watches on the quarterdeck, and performed 3M DC maintenance. All the things we tend to take for granted when we get caught up in the glamour of the almighty RFI....and it is vitally important to RFI equipment. But, behind every RFI is a technician (and process) that makes it happen.

The CARL VINSON AIMD pros making their piece of the RCOH happen provide me with enough pride to be borderline sinful. I hesitate to detail any of the work the calibration folks are doing. For any ship in availability, from the simple to the complex, the calibration lab folk are increasingly more heavily tasked.

Much of their work is tied directly to the shipyard contractor selling off work to the Navy. It is very easy to link directly their contributions to completing the overhaul on time and on budget. We don’t have SeaOpDet personnel onboard but in less than a year we’ll be getting underway again and with another 25 years worth of nuclear fuel and life cycle capacity to put to use making an aircraft carrier’s life-Cycle of 50 years possible

Sirens of the Sea

BY Capt Eric Dean ('80)

“America, wrote Thomas Wolfe, is a fabulous country, the only fabulous country; it is the one place where miracles not only happen, but where they happen all the time”. I am one of those miracles. From an early age I wanted to sail the Seven Seas. The stories of Commodore Hanson and the Manila Galleon and Horatio Nelson at the Battle of the Nile captivated my imagination. The lure of Odysseus and the “wine dark sea” of the Mediterranean and Captain Cook’s adventures in the South Sea Islands beckoned me with a siren’s song. The 1931 aviation movie classic *“Dawn Patrol”* with Errol Flynn and David Niven stirred my flying passions. I was hooked. After 28 years of naval service, I have sailed all the Seven Seas and never looked back with regret or remorse. It’s been one helluva ride!

I was first commissioned in 1974 when ADM Elmo Zumwalt was CNO. Going through AOCS with Marine Drill Instructors in Pensacola, VT-5, VT-10 and VT-86, I was sure I was destined for the skies over Haiphong and Hanoi in an A6 Intruder, but it was not to be. After President Nixon “declared victory” in 1975, the pipelines were cut in half and many of us were offered Marine Corps aviation, a life as a “skimmer” on tin cans or UDT/Seals. This was definitely not my cup of tea and I moved on. After a few years at Beech Aircraft (now Beech-Raytheon) and the Boeing Military Airplane Division, Wichita, I joined our community as a Direct Commission (*sui generis* – *one of a kind*) and began the greatest adventure of my life.

Over the years I have had the privilege of serving with and working for some of the finest men and women this nation had to offer. As we approach the aerospace maintenance community’s 40th anniversary, I am mindful of both the newness of our unique discipline, but also of the tradition that goes back to the dawn of naval aviation at the turn of the 20th century. It is a proud tradition of service, sacrifice and stewardship. The original group was made up of aviators and “mustang mechanics”, whose sole passion and mission was the improvement of safety and mission readiness. As we have branched out into acquisition and procurement, life cycle sustainment, information systems and data management, it still remains the golden thread that binds us together. I am proud to have served and been a part of the greatest Navy that ever sailed.

Many of my mentors, friends and colleagues are no longer with us. As I drive past Arlington Cemetery each day on my way to the Navy Annex, I am reminded of the fragility of life and the tenuous grasp we all have on our reality as we understand it. Death, disease, physical impairment and lucrative business careers have taken their toll, but I can still remember the familiar faces, the no nonsense approach to “God and gravity”, and the quintessential dedication and discipline that remain the core of our existence. When I first arrived on NIMITZ in 1980, Tom “Rhino” Hancock was the AIMD Officer. I relieved Ltjg Stan Pyle as the IM-2 Division Officer



and was introduced to the finest mechanic and leader I have ever met, ADCS Moose. A former AD(R), he taught me more about engines (recips and jet), what made people tick, genuine team work (not IPTs or CFTs), mutual respect, hard work and dealing with adversity than I learned in three decades of service. Raised in the backwoods of South Carolina, with rough hands like slabs of country bacon, he was a paragon of virtuous simplicity, honesty, integrity, decency and common sense. Aside from the occasional bouts with alcohol and liberty mischief, he represented the best in naval aviation. He knew his business, his people and the limits of human endurance; physical, emotional and spiritual. He represented the best in a Chief Petty Officer and in a Greenshirt.

Over the ensuing years, I have been most fortunate to have learned our trade in the footsteps and shadows of such 1520s luminaries as Glenn Boston, Tom Conroy, Bill Englehart, Stu Paul, and Charlie Code, and trusted friends and colleagues such as Rick Nielsen, Jon Harding, Mike Berkin, Curt Shanahan, Art Pruitt (yes, Virginia, you can learn from peers and subordinates) and LDOs Steve Johnson, John Kimmel, and Jerry Reinke. As the poet Charles Lamb wrote before his death in 1834, *"How some they have died, and some they have left me; and some are taken from me; all are departed; All, all are gone, the old familiar faces"*. In this season of remembrance and being thankful, allow me the opportunity to express my gratitude to them and countless other Greenshirts for all their collective efforts, sage advice and wise counsel, and more importantly, for taking the time to nurture, sustain and sometimes chide a young man from the farm belt of Indiana in chasing his dream.

As the shadows lengthen, I know that I have been blessed in so many ways. Three ships company tours, two squadrons, five Staffs and two overseas tours in Japan and England; it doesn't get much better than that. I have survived crushed vertebrae from a collapsed JBD on MIDWAY, a typhoon in the Sea of Japan that ripped up the starboard catwalks and destroyed most of our spare tie down chains, and as a Repair Locker Officer fresh from Philadelphia Fire Fighting School, helped fight a major flight deck fire on NIMITZ that took the lives of more than a dozen shipmates. That episode resulted in the implementation of the Navy's Zero Tolerance drug policy and testing. My skipper put me in the infirmary with a concussion during a Crossing the Line Ceremony (darn Shellbacks), and I came away relatively unscathed after being thrown through a plate glass window in Bremerhaven by drunken sailors while on Shore Patrol. I have had my share of motorcycle and car wrecks, a bout with cancer, the deaths of a sibling, colleagues, friends and beloved relatives, and yet I still believe that I have lived a charmed life. I am still married to the same wonderful woman after 30 years, have two sons, one who just returned from his second tour in Iraq and seven grandchildren (yes, they fixed that before it became a village!).

Ecclesiastes Chapter 3, says, *"To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven"*. Reluctantly, it is time for me to "swallow the anchor" and retire. As a fellow AMDO classmate, I know that Terry Merritt will be thrilled to be the new senior 1520 Captain on active duty. I *will miss* the "real" Foc'sle Follies (prior to Tailhook), Pattaya Beach by moonlight, Olongapo and Subic City at Thanksgiving and Christmas, and early spring in Atsugi and Yokosuka with cherry blossoms in full bloom. In my mind's eye, I can never forget the canopy of stars and southern cross off Hobart, Tasmania, the fragrance of the crisp salt air off Sicily, the Ready Room high jinks, "steel beach" picnics in the Arabian Gulf, the camaraderie of the "dirty shirt" Wardroom, and the Homecoming celebrations. I will *not miss* the midnight to four Quarter Deck watches at Pier 12 Norfolk, Portsmouth shipyard in January or Pusan in the dead of winter, dumpster diving for Classified Material, line handlers, twilight UNREPS/VERTREPS, and 9-11 month deployments. I will vividly remember the aromas of Fleet Landing in *bella Napoli* and "clam shell" duty at 3 a.m., the monotony of Shore Patrols in Alexandria, Egypt, or Boat Officer Watches in Bremerhaven at Christmas with a homesick Coxswain and an angry Marine loaded for bear.

"Everyone is as a God made him", wrote Miguel Cervantes after his loss of a hand at the great naval Battle of Lepanto, *"and often a great deal worse"*. I did my best and I am sure the torch will be in better hands. Maranatha!

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A Virginia Monologue

By Ken Marks ('75)

"Could use a little help out here," Julie called from the back yard.

"Just a second," I bellowed from behind my laptop. "Let me finish this paragraph, and I'll be right there."

It had been about a week since she had pressed me into service for a run to Home Depot where I parked in my usual spot as far away from anyone deemed capable of

slamming a car door into the side of my Explorer. Sure it's a '96, but I don't think I'm crazy to want to keep it ready for inspection. Besides, I've looked at the new ones and can't imagine strapping on a mortgage of that size with the price of gas headed north. Anyway, as we approached the entrance I grabbed a standard cart only to hear Julie announce, "Not so fast, Big Guy. We're going to need one of those orange flat-beds." I knew then I should've bought stock.



In my own defense, that was last week; so after I off-loaded about a ton of mulch and no less than paycheck's worth of other unidentifiable stuff to the garage, quite honestly I forgot about it. I can't say the same for Julie.

"What on Earth are you doing that's so important? It's Saturday for goodness sake. You've been sitting behind that thing for the better part of a week. Can't you pull yourself away for an hour to give me a hand?" I could sense a change in her voice, but I didn't think it too serious. I may have been wrong.

"I'm working on an article for the AMDO Gazette. Marty's been pressuring me to slap something together for the next release," I replied.

"Who the heck is Marty, and does he wash your dirty socks?" she asked. Her tone had definitely changed.

"Marty Reagan ... you know ... the guy who publishes that newsletter we get in the mail every once in a while to keep his old shipmates in the loop. You've seen it," I said.

"Yeah, I've seen it ... and for the life of me I can't help but wonder why he wants your two cents," she said. "Isn't that some kind of professional exchange? And hasn't the game changed a bit since you hung up your wash khakis?" she asked.

The inquisition continued, "Who reads your drivel anyway?"

I was quick to respond, "I don't know ... maybe guys like Mack Prose, Bobby Neal, Rick Trayner ... they've all got time on their hands. And I'll bet Fred Braman gives it a quick scan if he's not out sailing," I declared with measured certainty. "I like to think Phil Smiley reads my stuff, but he's probably a lot busier now what with being a doctor and all, so I can't be sure." I continued, "I'll wager Dave Beck gives it a go even though he stopped corresponding 'cause he thinks he still owes me money. He might, but I don't remember. Anyway, if he'd just buy me a beer I'd call it even."

"Will you face it for once?" she demanded. "You're over the hill." I braced for more incoming. "I know you watch the news, so you can't help but see what's going on out there. It's a young folks' game, my friend, and they're not going to pick you to play anymore." Squinting, I received the final blow. "Wake up and smell the formaldehyde!"

"But our group did the whole Vietnam thing ... not to mention the Cold War and bunch of other stuff along the way. You've got to give us a little credit, for crying out loud!" I could feel the hair on the back of my neck rising lock-step with my blood pressure.

By now Julie was standing over my shoulder. She grabbed my arm as she demanded, "Look at me!" Still seated, I turned to meet her eyes as requested.

"Kenny, it's over!" She said it like a retired teacher. There was a noticeable pause before she continued, but this time with signs of an understanding heart. "I know you and your shipmates did a good job. You answered your country's call and did your best with the tools at hand, but it was a different time and place. You mention Vietnam to the youngsters today and you might as well be mumbling about the Battle of Hastings!"

Another brief pause allowed me to absorb her wisdom. "And they certainly don't want to hear about Olongapo before the streets were paved. It just doesn't register. They've got their own stories now, besides they're busy." She was almost done. "Harsh as it may sound pal, you're yesterday's fish! But if it will make you feel any better, in twenty years today's varsity will be stale news also ... and their wives will be telling *them* to get a grip. That's just the way it is."

I have to admit, her words, though instructional in nature, were delivered with a modicum of sensitivity. I looked at the floor for a while before responding. "I suppose you're right," I answered. Sometimes the truth really does hurt.

Rubbing my shoulder, Julie added, "Listen, if you want to be somebody's hero, how about dragging your peaches into the back yard where you can help me spread some mulch." She said it with a smile. "Besides, Marty's not the one cooking your dinner tonight." She left me no choice.

Oh, well, so much for an article this time around. Not to worry, though. Julie's planning a trip to see her sister in a few weeks, so I'll have the place to myself. I may even have beer for breakfast just because I can. Heck, I promised Marty a few thoughts on retired life, and by golly that's what he's going to get.

Who's in charge here, anyway?

Kenneth Marks



On Being an Action Officer for the Carrier Readiness Team

By CDR Steve Crawmer ('92)

The thinking for this article was mostly centered on the things I could discuss about the Carrier Readiness Team I am part of. Captain Ted "Slapshot" Carter, Commanding Officer, USS CARL VINSON, leads Carrier Readiness Team. CRT initially was an adhoc organization chartered to report out Aircraft Carrier Readiness.

Carrier Readiness Team is also a successful effort to providing an approach to functionally aligning the carrier fleet like all other class ships and Type Model Series aircraft groups. It reports to the Air Boss, VADM Kilcline, and directly to Naval Aviation Enterprise, Current Readiness, RADM Goodwin, Commander, Naval Air Force Atlantic. CRT has been around about 2 or 3 years where it started as an organization that measured things in aircraft carriers. For those knowledgeable of Ready for Tasking – Equipment (RFT-E) and carriers you'll understand that the first real tangible measures have been in this arena. RFT-E now includes measuring everything from 8 categories, 77 systems, from combination ovens (combi ovens) in the galley to complex air traffic control radar systems.

The purpose of measuring various elements making RFT-E is to gauge where systems are failing and what impact the dollars we spend on keeping them ready for use impacts the system. One could argue that measuring RFT-E should correlate more directly to actual readiness. It doesn't necessarily. What makes aircraft carriers "ready" is very complex. Not only what readiness is but what generates it. Aircraft Carriers don't have Mission Essential Sub-system Matrices (MESMs) yet, that define varying degrees of readiness. Most of us can get our hands and arms around what makes an aircraft RFT. I don't know many that can say the same thing about an aircraft carrier. It just depends. The book is being written.

Additionally, with aircraft we have NALCOMIS, a maintenance management system that facilitates the effective documentation framework that eventually renders a readiness number....in so many ways. With a ship we have a more rudimentary system with casualty reporting that tolerates uneven reporting across the aircraft carrier fleet. Measuring RFT-E doesn't wholly solve the readiness reporting problem but it does go a long way in getting closer to perhaps being a bit predictive with important material condition inspections and INSERV. Could you correlate RFT-E health with INSERV health predictively? We think so. Probably depends on where you set the filtering and how deep you dive.

We do know that we can measure "churn" – a measure of the amount of change injected in any particular maintenance availability yard period. The amount of churn experienced is a particularly ominous indicator of the success or failure of an availability. Work Package Execution Churn is defined as all new work that is added or work that is cancelled from the contract signed by the Shipyard, TYCOM and Program Office where price and scope of the CNO maintenance availability was agreed upon. This metric measures the efficiency of project execution from when the CNO maintenance availability contract was signed up to the end of availability. Churn data is collected to determine the amount of modifications to the work package and, when used with other metrics, to determine if any impact to execution costs and performance occur based on amount of churn and when the work package execution churn occurs.

Aircraft RFT and aircraft carrier RFT-E make for an apples and oranges comparison. With aircraft we have a measured list of configuration requirements that make an aircraft Ready for Tasking. An RFT F/A-18 is basically a full mission capable aircraft to include FLIR. What should an RFT aircraft carrier look like? In the Carrier Readiness Team we are trying to further develop the metrics needed to define and report readiness.....we're also working on ways to develop metrics that drive behavior.....in order to get the right amount of readiness, at the right time, and at the right cost. Fairly reasonable and yet a very tall order. We look to develop metrics that tell *the* story and drive behavior. Not so much metrics that tell a particular story.

The Carrier Readiness Team is sub-divided into three sub-teams, all led by senior Navy Captains. The Life-Cycle Management Team, led by CRT Co-lead and recently promoted RDML Tom Moore. RDML Moore was PMS-312. The new team lead is Captain Frank Semei. The Operations Process Improvement and Standardization (OPIS) Team is led by CNAL N3 Capt Woody Gruetzmacher, and the People and Training Readiness Team is led by CNAF N7 Captain Carroll Lefon. Each of the sub-teams drives major pieces supporting the ability of CRT to report out readiness for aircraft carriers. These three pillars form the pipelines for the elements making up total readiness....Life-Cycle Maintenance, People Readiness, and Process Standardization.

Life-Cycle Management and People Readiness more easily translate directly to readiness. The OPIS team however, (Operations Processes and Improvement Standardization) is certainly a readiness facilitator, and perhaps a bit more indirectly. OPIS is the newest sub-team, likely most immature, and with tons of potential. Much of what OPIS does has to do with standardizing processes throughout the ship. Some of what they do gets mixed into the AIRSpeed bowl, however, there is a difference. There is a trans-process synergy between the two.

AIRSpeed is being implemented in all aircraft carriers and on a very deliberate schedule. Already implemented at shore sites, Enterprise AIRSpeed Patuxent River and CNAF Maintenance (Policy) are driving this train. AIRSpeed implementation brings Buffer Management Tool software, training that drives cultural change, and an entirely new process to readiness generation at the Intermediate and Depot levels of maintenance. Organizational, too. CRT OPIS, on the other hand, intends to standardize processes in the aircraft carrier fleet. First we solicit fleet input leading areas of interest. Any processes employed in our business, consuming resources, both manpower and material, are reviewed for potential efficiency gains. It is believed that if we examine how we do things with an eye on efficiency we may be able to capitalize on the efficiencies gained by some, and replicate those good processes to be shared in the fleet.

One of the best examples is in the shipboard generation of oxygen and nitrogen. We determined that it *was* necessary to keep two generating plants (original design includes forward and aft plants in NIMITZ class carriers), and if we didn't continuously operate two we



could save manpower. So, by alternatively shutting one plant down and retaining it as a back-up (process change) we could make sufficient oxygen for the ship and air wing needs.

This process change was adapted by policy makers and drove a manpower change. Other areas of interest include consolidating micro-min operations between combat systems and AIMD, a combined paraloft/sail-loft, perhaps a Support Equipment Technician Sea OpDet - the list is extensive. What CRT and OPIS do is provide a methodical approach to garnering efficiencies, not always necessarily actual dollar savings or manpower reductions, although when appropriate we should reduce to be efficient.

When I checked aboard CARL VINSON I was available, invited, directed to, jumped on, the opportunity to contribute in the Carrier Readiness Team. I couldn't be happier. Lots of hard work. I'd like to say I split time between AIMD and CRT about 70/30, and frankly can't tell you that. It's probably more like 75/75 depending on the week. As the CO's CRT Action Officer, I'm knowledgeable of most that's going on and get to drive some of it.

One of the next big challenges to grapple with is actually one we've been working for awhile and now with a new twist. What is the impact if KENNEDY and KITTY HAWK are de-commissioned prior to the FORD being ready? Perhaps we better not de-com them both. It certainly is not in our decision swim-lane. Providing the leadership with the right information is.

Not yet certain about the next chapter in my book. I know that the experience of being in the RCOH and Action Officer in Carrier Readiness Team will serve me well, wherever I go. Next up on the RCOH track is THEODORE ROOSEVELT sometime after her next deployment. If you are selected for TR please do not hesitate to climb up on that challenge. Embrace it! You'll be very happy.

How I Completed My Doctoral Program

By Shawn Hankins ('81)

Back in December, shortly after I had successfully defended my dissertation, Marty asked me to write an article about my experiences in pursuing a doctoral degree. For those of you that like the "bottom line up front," I would tell you that I thoroughly enjoyed all the challenging aspects of my doctoral student experience and am glad I chose to complete the degree, despite the fact that I may never "use" it. For those of you that want to learn more about my own doctoral experience, read on! I should state up front, however, that things have changed quite a bit as far as the program I just completed are concerned, and the "gouge" therefore is somewhat dated, but hopefully those of you interested in pursuing doctoral studies will still find this article of some use.

I started my program at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) in 2000 while I was the AIMD Officer at NAS Lemoore. I first learned of the distance-based doctoral programs in Higher Education Administration (mine having an Aviation focus) at UNL while searching online for a Master's degree program for my wife. Consequently, my discovery of a doctoral program that could be completed entirely via distance learning was purely accidental. Back in 2000, this is the only program of its kind that I discovered being offered at a "traditional" university (as opposed to a for-profit school like Walden University or University of Phoenix), but I believe there are several others out there today that can be completed online, or with minimal on-campus time requirements. Depending on your ultimate goals, it may not matter whether you go the traditional or for-profit route, but in my opinion (and that's all it is...my opinion) a degree obtained from a traditional research university looks better on your resume if you are looking to work in academia, even though I'm sure these other programs are just as rigorous. I think a doctorate from any accredited school is going to make your

resume that much stronger in the government or corporate world, regardless of the source.

Although I had no previous experience in higher education administration, the program's founding director (since retired), Dr. Alan Seagren, encouraged me to apply. Then, as now, the program offered two degree options: a Doctor of Education (Ed.D.) or a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.). Although the Ph.D. is more widely recognized, I chose the Ed.D. option because of my future plans (since abandoned in favor of a second career as a civil servant!) to pursue a post-Navy career as a community college administrator. Another factor in my decision was the fact that on-campus work was not required at the time of my application for the Ed.D., while the Ph.D. option required two face-to-face ten-week Summer sessions on the main campus.

In case you're wondering, as I understand it the Ph.D. is generally regarded as a "research focused" degree, while the Ed.D. is aimed at "practitioners." As a practical matter, I took the same classes and completed a dissertation just like my research-focused Ph.D. peers (in fact, my dissertation was as long, if not longer than many of them!). At the time of this writing, the on-campus 10-week sessions for the Ph.D. option are now "encouraged" instead of required, but a doctoral candidate must defend his/her research proposal (this is where you "sell" your idea for dissertation research) in person. The defense of the dissertation itself is also recommended to be accomplished in person, but is apparently no longer mandatory. In my own case, I never set foot in Nebraska until I defended my dissertation prior to commencement. I defended my proposal via teleconference and the brief on-campus visits I'd planned to accomplish for dissertation discussions with my advisor were cancelled when I got orders to the CSG-5 staff in Japan back in 2002.

I'm getting ahead of myself, though, so let me circle back and talk a bit about the application process itself. In my



case, the deadline for application was only four weeks from when I first discovered the program, so I had to scramble to get all the required documents together (looking back, I'm not sure why I needed to hurry...you can usually start a program in a non-degree seeking status). At the time, UNL required three letters of recommendation, the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), curriculum vitae (C.V.) and three writing samples in addition to an application to the graduate college.

I obtained three letters of recommendation (one from my CO, and one each from then-CDRs Beck and Disano) and reproduced copies of my thesis along with several papers I had done at NPS (had to convert them from ancient PFS Professional Write files written on 5.25 disks!). Not sure if it helped or not in my getting accepted into the program, but I had the thesis and writing samples professionally bound and submitted the entire package in a large faux leather accordion file...I figured with my undergraduate GPA I could use all the style points I could get! As for the C.V., I had no idea what one was at the time (it's a sort of resume), but found many examples on the web and this was not difficult to produce.

As for the GRE, I took it "on the fly" on a standby basis since the deadline to sign up was passed, and luckily, there was a no-show the day of the exam and I was allowed to sit for it. I did surprisingly well given my lack of preparation, but since I took the last paper-based GRE and used no test preparation gougé I have no helpful hints to offer for future GRE-takers (I understand the GRE is now computer-based and scored differently). Given the competitive nature of the admissions process, I would suggest that spending a few bucks on some test preparation courses/software is probably a good investment, though.

I was in the middle of the first semester of classes when I found out that I had been formally accepted into the program. I do not know what the acceptance rate was at that time, but of the 20 or so new people in my classes that semester 4-5 dropped out because they had been rejected and figured it was pointless for them to continue. I have heard from program administrators at UNL that things have "tightened up" quite a bit in terms of acceptance rates in the last couple of years in order to reduce the number of doctoral advisees assigned to each faculty member.

Upon acceptance, I was assigned a doctoral advisor (Dr. Miles Bryant who holds an Ed.D. from Stanford). The first order of business was development of my formal program of studies and Miles assisted me in selecting courses that would best match my future community college administrator goals. He also assisted in evaluating my previous Master's degree work for application to my program. When the dust settled, I had received credit for several courses (on the order of 45 semester hours), such as statistics, research methods and various management courses, leaving me with 55 hours left to complete. Of these required credit hours, 40 were comprised of coursework (i.e., individual classes and on-line seminars) and 15 were allocated to the dissertation. By way of comparison, most of my Ph.D. option counterparts tended to have fewer classroom hours and more (on the order of 20) hours apportioned for the dissertation.

The accomplishment of the coursework went fairly smoothly for me. I generally took two courses a semester, including the summer semester, which is broken into two 5-week sessions. At the time, UNL used Lotus Notes as the mechanism for managing class discussions and assignments and I found this to be a very convenient in that it allowed for asynchronous classroom "attendance." I could come home from work and submit my response to class discussion on my own schedule

without having to be online at a prescribed time. The school has subsequently switched to using Blackboard, but I believe it is still asynchronous in format. Along the way, I studied alongside folks that were mostly practicing administrators or teachers at the college level. As an active duty military officer I was something of a novelty and the people I "met" in the online chat room were eager to learn about my experiences and what led me to this particular doctoral program. Because I did not attend any on-campus Summer sessions, I've never met any of these people in person, yet I consider many of them to be friends...it's sort of weird! Regardless, I learned a great deal and found the online learning experience to be as rigorous and meaningful as any "brick and mortar" venue.

Once I was largely through with the coursework, I was scheduled to take my comprehensive exam. At UNL, a student had two options at the time: 1) come to the campus and sit for a 24-hour written exam wherein you were not allowed to use notes/references, or 2) sit for a three-day exam where you could use reference material and complete it at home. I chose the latter option and solicited 8 exam questions from UNL faculty (2 from my advisor and 6 from three other professors I had taken classes with). The questions were all essays, and typically had multiple components to each. By the time I was finished, my combined response to these questions was in excess of 80 pages (including reference citations). I submitted the responses to Dr. Bryant, who then farmed them out to the professors that submitted the questions for their review and response. I technically passed the exam with this first submission, since 3 of the 4 graders gave me a thumbs-up, but Dr. Bryant recommended that I rewrite portions in order to get a unanimous verdict from the group. I was given a day to accomplish this re-writing and was officially informed that I had passed about two weeks later.

At UNL, once you have passed the comprehensive exam you must file an application for doctoral candidacy. Miles helped me with this as well, and once it was approved the "clock" began to tick for me to complete the dissertation and thus, the degree. At Nebraska, a doctoral candidate has three years from the day you attain candidacy to complete the degree. In the end, I needed a waiver for this requirement since my candidacy was due to expire 12/06 and it took me an additional year to finish the dissertation. In addition, all doctoral candidates must enroll for at least 1 semester hour for every regular (not Summer) semester until the degree is completed. I tried to manage my dissertation hours accordingly, but still ended up going a couple of hours over my required program hours in order to finish. There's nothing wrong with this, it just means more money out of your pocket until you finish.

The dissertation phase was, by far, the most challenging aspect of the program. First, coming up with the research idea is a challenge in itself. Some of my classmates had a clear idea of what they wanted to research from day one (probably since they were mostly practicing administrators in the field), but my own experience was kind of "evolutionary" and took longer than many of my peers. By the time I had completed most of the class work and seminars, an idea began to coalesce and I started to work on the proposal as part of the Dissertation Proposal course (at UNL, the proposal is basically what will become the first three chapters of the dissertation). As it turns out, Miles Bryant was the professor for this course and he is also the author of *The Portable Dissertation Advisor*, a book aimed at helping distance-based doctoral students get "to the finish line." This book proved to be invaluable, since I was unable to complete the proposal course due



to CSG-5's deployment in support of OIF in the spring of 2003. Nearly three years later, when my proposal was approved I was finally able to clear the grade of "I" in that course!

Initially, the plan was for me to submit a draft of Chapter 1 (and subsequent chapters as I completed them) via email to Dr. Bryant for review and comment. This process proved to be laborious and a definite disadvantage over having the ability to meet and discuss things face-to-face. Due to his student advisement load, it would sometimes take weeks to get any comments back and as a consequence a lot of time went by without much progress. In the end, I decided that I would just write the whole thing (turned out to be about 100 pages) and submit the entire proposal at once. This proved to be a good strategy and I was scheduled for my proposal defense (to be accomplished in front of all four of my committee members) in the Spring of 2006 while I was working for LMI. This defense was supposed to be accomplished remotely using the local Navy Campus' VTC capability, but there were some last minute technical issues that necessitated an audio-only teleconference. Based on some informal comments from my committee members beforehand, I was expecting a challenging, but fairly brief Q&A session. It ended up being an agonizing and demoralizing three-hour marathon that left me with the feeling that I had to start all over!

At this point, Dr. Bryant stepped in as my advocate and ultimately convinced the committee that I could proceed after making some changes to the proposal. What was finally approved was for me to conduct a content analysis (both human-coded and computer-based content analysis) of aviation baccalaureate program materials (college catalogs, brochures, etc.) in order to identify notions of quality to be found in this literature. There's a lot more to it than this simple explanation might make it seem, but no need to make this long article even longer!

Once I was given the "green light" to proceed with the study, I began by developing a survey instrument and obtaining permission to administer it to aviation educators and program administrators. While I was waiting for the results to come back, I used my time to start reworking the first three chapters by changing the tenses of action statements from future to past-tense. Betting that my study would actually produce some meaningful findings, I changed comments such as, "this study seeks to determine if a relationship exists between quality variables" to comments like, "this study proved there is a relationship between variables" and so on.

As with my proposal, the original plan was for me to feed finished draft chapters to Dr. Bryant for review as I completed them. As before, however, forward progress was so slow that I decided to take a chance on gathering the data and completing an entire draft (including all analysis, tables, graphs, appendices, reference citations, etc.) before I made the first submission. This took several months and I finally submitted this draft (I think much to Dr. Bryant's and the rest of my committee's surprise since I'd been out of contact that whole time...bad move on my part, but it worked out!) in late September of last year. With the help of Miles's book, I apparently had done a pretty good job on my own, because I was told to plan on a defense (on campus in Nebraska) in early December 2007. I ended up having to do some minor re-writes that were directed by other committee members, followed by development of PowerPoint slides for the oral defense.

The dissertation defense itself proved to be relatively painless and was accomplished in a forum that was open to the general public and attended by all my committee members. Although there was lots of lively discussion about my results, it was a very collegial and non-confrontational exchange (unlike the proposal defense!). After about two hours of presentation and discussion, I was asked to leave the room while they deliberated on my fate. This deliberation took nearly half-an-hour, so I began to worry about a possible major re-write in my future. However, after first congratulating me and calling me "Dr. Hankins" (music to my ears!), the committee proceeded to tell me of a few minor changes needed in the abstract and other assorted nits. I was able to complete all these changes and obtain the necessary signatures before I left Nebraska the following day. Although I had spent a great deal of time and effort in finishing this program, I elected not to incur the expense in time/money in order to attend the actual doctoral hooding ceremony and commencement exercises two weeks later. I now regret not doing this, so if you get this far yourself, please reconsider a decision to not attend graduation.

Well, that's the story of how I completed my own doctoral degree program. If any readers are contemplating their own pursuit of a doctorate, please feel free to contact me if there's anything I can do to help (my email addresses are on the AMDO webpage). If you're interested in learning more about my own program at UNL, the webpage can be found at <http://cehs.unl.edu/edad/graduate/heIntro.shtml>

PCSing and need a house? Check the AMDO Real Estate Blog, moderated by Laura Caldwell (Mrs. Rob Caldwell). This is a place to list your own real estate to rent or sell, or to look for real estate to buy or rent. Its open only to AMDOs and is not a general real estate web resource. Check it out at: <http://amdohouse.blogspot.com/>

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