

TAC Sea Survival School @ Langley AFB, VA and Homestead AFB, FL. By Paul Swindell

This article is dedicated to and in the memory of the airman who gave so much in training our aircrew members on how to survive at sea. I don't know where they are now but I'm sure that the aircrews who went down at sea or land and made it back said thank you for the training that the Air Force provided.

In August 1962 the TAC Sea Survival School was started by one Life Support Officer Maj Wayne E. Williams, and six Life Support personnel (922X0) Jack V. Messina, Maurice Ouzts, James W. Stanford, Donald Parker, Paul Swindell and Warren G. Quade . By January 1964 the school had grown to two officers, nine 922X0's, five 921X0's, twelve boat operators and two Admin personnel. Not too many people knew that 922X0's helped start this school.



Below is a list of Langley AFB enlisted personnel that were assigned to setup the TAC Sea Survival School in April/May 1962. The two officers assigned were Captain Wayne E. Williams, commandant of

the school and later Captain Danton T. Sherwood.

<u>GRADE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>CAFSC</u>	<u>FAC</u>	<u>DUTY</u>	<u>TITLE</u>
A1C	LARRY A JONES	70250	8002008	Admin Spec1	
MSGT	WILLIAM G LEIGHTON	B92130A	5620005	Rescue and Survival Tech ✓	
SSGT	JAMES H NEWMAN SR	59150	5620005	Boatmaster ✓	
A1C	THEODORE E CLARK	59150	5620005	Seaman ✓	
SSGT	JAMES M HUCKLEY	59151	5620005	Marine Engineman ✓	
SSGT	ROBERT D MCLENDON	59151	5620005	Marine Engineman ✓	
TSGT	EDMOND W MILLER	59170	5620005	Boatmaster ✓	
TSGT	THOMAS E SWAINSON	59170	5620005	Boatmaster ✓	
MSGT	JOHN H DELEZEN	59171	5620005	Marine Engine Tech ✓	
A3C	ARTHUR D MATHEWS	70230	5620005	Admin Spec1	
MSGT	GEORGE H SERRANO	59151	5620005	Marine Engine Tech ✓	
A1C	WAYNE R NIEMETZ	59151	5620005	Marine Engineman ✓	
SSGT	DAVID E PIPER	B92130A	5620005	Rescue and Survival Spec1 ✓	
SSGT	CHARLES G CRIPPEN	92130A	5620005	Rescue and Survival Spec1 ✓	
SSGT	NORMAN J TURLEK	92130A	5620005	Rescue and Survival Spec1 ✓	
TSGT	DONALD L PARKER	92250A	5620005	Pers Equip Spec1/General ✓	
SSGT	BILLY R PELFREY	92250A	5620005	Pers Equip Spec1/General ✓	
SSGT	PAUL A SWINDELL	92250A	5620005	Pers Equip Spec1/General ✓	
A1C	WARREN G QUADE	92250A	5620005	Pers Equip Spec1/General ✓	
A1C	JAMES W STANFORD	92250A	5620005	Pers Equip Spec1/General ✓	
A3C	JAMES F WINDON	92250A	5620005	Pers Equip Spec1/General ✓	
SSGT	CLARENCE L LEWLEY	59150	5620005	Boatmaster ✓	
SSGT	VERNON C CRAWFORD	59150	5620005	Boatmaster ✓	
SSGT	HORACE R TANNER JR	59151	5620005	Marine Engine Tech ✓	
MSGT	DECATOR H AUSTIN	59170	5620005	Boatmaster ✓	
A1C	JAMES T MURRAY	70250	5620005	Admin Spec1 ✓	
SSGT	JAMES H COLLINS	B92130A	5620005	Rescue and Survival Tech ✓	
A1C	JOHN L RILEY	92250B	5620005	Pers Equip Spec1/Pressure ✓	
TSGT	MAURICE W OUZTS JR	92270A	5620005	Pers Equip Spec1/General ✓	
SMSGT	JACK V MESSINA	B92290	5620005	Aircrew Protection Supr ✓	
	TSGT James Short	B92130A		Rescue & Survival Tech	

Capt. Fred Ewing created the Air Force's Sea Survival School as stated in the November 1963 issue of Popular Mechanics magazine on page 34.

I would encourage people to read the following article which came out on the school in Popular Mechanics Magazine, dated November 1963, titled "HOW TO SURVIVE AT SEA", page 112 by KEVIN BROWN. This article can be found on the Internet. This article tells what went on at the school day by day during the course.

The school operated 5 days per week. Monday and Tuesday was classroom instruction. The rest of the week was spent at the water training area and out in the ocean with hands on instruction. The students watched a parachute jump demo using survival equipment that the student would fly with. Each student performed a Parasail flight off the deck of school's converted LCM. Each student got to experience time in several types of life rafts using the survival gear in their survival kits.

On Feb. 1st 1963, Hq. TAC sent four 922X0's (we all volunteered) to attend Army Airborne school at Ft Benning, GA., SSGT James W. Stanford, TSGT Maurice Ouzts, SSGT Paul Swindell, and A1C Warren

G. Quade. As far as I know and I have checked the best I could, we were the only 922X0 to attend the school at that time. We all completed the school and it changed our AFSC to (P922X0). TSGT Ouzts and SSGT Paul Swindell became Jump Master Qualified on 19 February 1964. The other two became Jump Masters at a later date. Upon completion of school, we joined the P921's demonstrating over water jumps in full survival gear each week for the students

In the off season, we would travel to ANG and Reserve units on staff visits with HQ TAC. We would also, while at the units, hold classroom instructions on the use of their survival equipment. Some days we would travel to Fort Lee, VA and work with the Army making night and tree jumps. Sometime the night jumps turned into tree jumps without the special gear we would normally wear for these types of jumps. We spent some time in the Army parachute shop learning to pack chutes. I don't think any of us ever jumped with the parachutes we helped pack. We also performed jumps at Langley AFB on special open house events. Our time in the off season was also spent improving lesson plans, painting the boats and making improvements to our training areas. Some of us completed a Scuba Diving School, attended the Basic Tropic Survival Course given by The Tropic Survival School, USAFSOUTHCOM, Albrook AFB, Canal Zone.

HOMESTEAD AFB, FLA.

The TAC Sea Survival School moved to the 4550 School Sq. (Sea Survival) (TAC), Homestead, FL somewhere around 10 November 1966. The following named personnel that I can remember were transferred.

Major Wayne E. Williams

(Rescue and Survival Tech) SMGT William G. Leighton

(Rescue and Survival Specl) SSGT Norman J. Turek, SSGT David Piper, SSGT James H. Collins, TSGT James Short

Pers Equip Specl, TSGT Donald L. Parker, SSGT Paul Swindell, SSGT James W. Stanford, A1C Warren G. Quade, A3C James F. Windon,

(Boat Master) Decator H. Austin, TSGT Clarence L. Lewey

(Marine Engineman) SSGT James Hurley, SSGT Marine Engineman, SSGT Robert D. Mclendon, A1C Wayne R. Niemetz

There are more personnel that were attached to the school at Homestead AFB, Fla but Sgt Stanford and I can't come up with their names. Sorry.

Taken at TURKEY POINT a few miles from Homestead AFB, FL, at our training area.



Left to Right SSgt Paul Swindell, SMSgt William Leighton, Maj. Wayne Williams, (Student), SSgt James Stanford and TSgt Clarence L. Lewey

EACH STUDENT RECEIVED BOTH CERTIFICATES UPON COMPLETION OF TRAINING

PARA-SAIL TRAINING



U.S. AIR FORCE



Tactical Air Command

BE IT KNOWN THAT ON THIS DAY, 8 June IN THE YEAR 1965,
SSGT PAUL A. SWINDELL, _____, SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED ONE PREMEDITATED
FREE PARA-SAIL DESCENT BY BEING TOWED ALOFT BY WATERCRAFT
TO A HEIGHT OF NO LESS THAN 200 FEET, RELEASING HIMSELF AND
DESCENDING BY PARA-SAIL TO THE WATER.

William G. Leighton
WILLIAM G. LEIGHTON, MSgt., USAF
TRAINING OFFICER/NCO

Wayne J. Williams
WAYNE J. WILLIAMS, Major, USAF
OIC, TAC SEA SURVIVAL SCHOOL

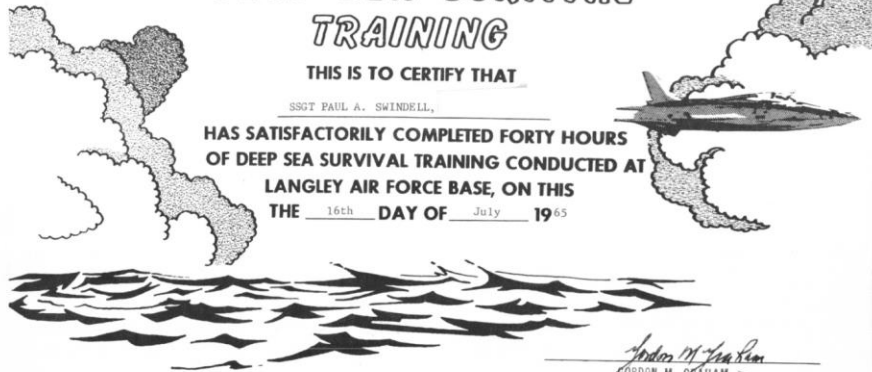
TACTICAL AIR COMMAND



DEEP SEA SURVIVAL TRAINING

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

SSGT PAUL A. SWINDELL,
HAS SATISFACTORILY COMPLETED FORTY HOURS
OF DEEP SEA SURVIVAL TRAINING CONDUCTED AT
LANGLEY AIR FORCE BASE, ON THIS
THE 16th DAY OF July 1965



Gordon M. Graham
GORDON M. GRAHAM
Major General, USAF
Assistant Deputy for Operations



These were KEY CHAINS given to each student who completed Training at HOMESTEAD on Friday afternoons. Many classes were given a dinner at TURKEY POINT upon completion of training. This was done by the FLORIDA POWER AND LIGHT CO.



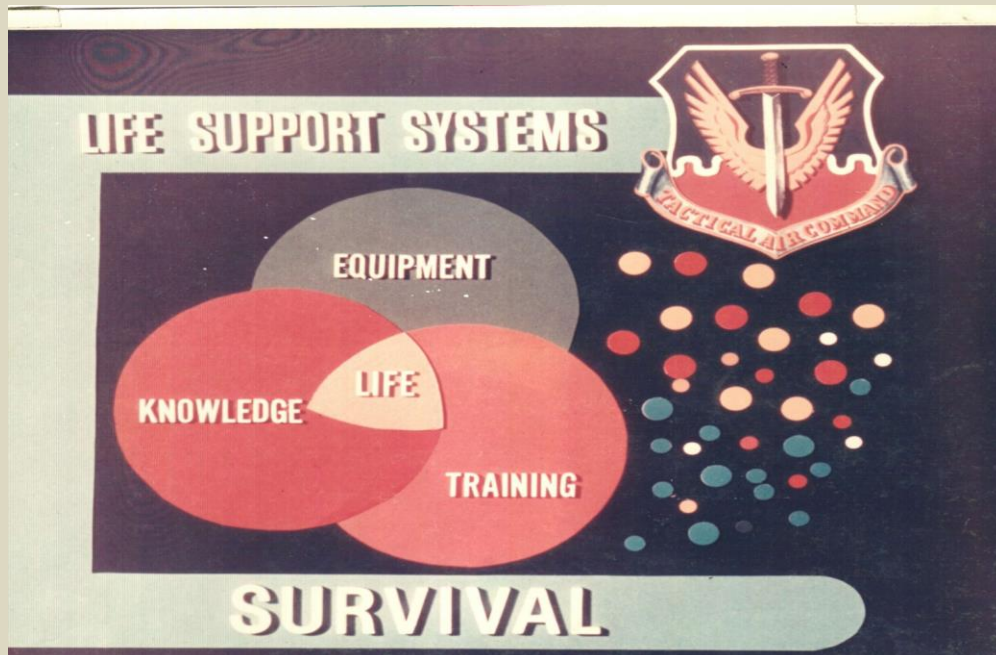
Belt Buckle we wore

Insignia on our shirts

OUR MOTO
PRAEMONITI AC PARATI
LATIN FOR
FORWARDED & FOREARMED

*The first TAC Sea Survival Conference was held at Langley AFB, VA (Article attached). Arlen Rappe and Paul Swindell were given the task by Lt. Col Theodore R. Harris and Maj. Fred B. Ewing, of HQ's TAC, to design a picture representing Life Support. I didn't know we didn't have one, so this is what we came up with. The following picture is what was used at the conference.

Between Dec. 1965 and Feb. 1966 the first designed symbol depicting the mission and objectives of the TAC/USAF Life Support System was used in the planning phase of the TAC Life Support System Conference and was approved by General Riddle, Assistant Deputy for Operations, Headquarters, Tactical Air Command. I have the Symbol (picture) and the write up. The negative and a slide are available if you want or need it.



PLAN ANNUAL EVENT

TAC Sea Survival Conference Hailed

By TROY WILLIAMS
Daily Press Military Writer

Sea survival experts from three foreign countries, two commercial airlines and all branches of the armed services, including overseas commands, are attending the first worldwide sea survival conference being held at Langley Air Force Base.

Maj. Fred B. Ewing, in charge of personnel survival equipment at headquarters, Tactical Air Command and a pioneer in the adoption of sea survival training in the Air Force, said the conference is being held at TAC Sea Survival School in order to permit the participants from all over the world to discuss survival training procedures, development and standardization of equipment and exchange of ideas.

Maj. Wayne Williams, commandant of the school, pointed out that the training attempts to insure the students capability to survive should they ever find themselves in a water survival situation.

Plan Annual Affair

The worldwide conference which began Tuesday and will end today has received such enthusiastic support that plans are being made to hold a similar meeting each year, Major Ewing said.

The Viet Nam war has placed increased emphasis on importance of survival of aircraft crews which are forced to ditch at sea, he added.

Wednesday afternoon, instructors at the TAC school gave a series of demonstrations of the type of training given to the approximately 1,300 students.

These demonstrations included a simulated parachute leap into the chilly waters of Back River, the boarding of life rafts and counter measures to prevent an inflated

parachute from drowning the person being dragged through the water and parachute jumps from a helicopter. The parachute jumps were made by Capt. Danton Sherwood and TSgt. James Short.

The demonstration was climaxed by a parasail jump by SSgt. Paul D. Swindell from the deck of the school's converted LCM.

Because of the stiff breeze, the parasail demonstration was scratched a few minutes after Swindell, held aloft by a parachute, was being hauled by a boat.

Civilian Observer

Included among the observers was Harry Warren, civilian air safety specialist with the Army Aviation's board of accident research.

Warren said the Army plans to begin a sea survival training program at Fort Tucker, Ala.

Survival

Continued From Page Three
ing program at Fort Tucker, Ala.

Norman Scholten, instructor in the Trans-World Airlines safety training program, explained that his company conducts sea survival training at Kansas City. However, he said, "the training is not as elaborate as that conducted at Langley." He will make a report on possible new training techniques as a result of the conference.

The school, Major Ewing said, is especially proud that the 20 graduates who have been forced to either bail out or ditch their aircraft at sea

have all managed to survive.

"It is good to know that the 14 graduates of this school who have bailed out at sea in Viet Nam have credited training received at Langley with saving their lives. They want more of this type training," Major Ewing said.

The TAC school which was organized has trained more than 4,600 personnel in the techniques of sea survival.



PARASAIL DEMONSTRATION

A parasail jump by SSgt. Paul D. Swindell was included among the demonstrations of survival equipment and techniques given at the Tactical Air Command's Sea Survival School Wednesday on program of the first worldwide sea survival conference at Langley Air Force Base.



SURVIVAL EQUIPMENT INSPECTION

Representatives from three foreign countries are among the participants in the sea survival conference being held at Langley Air Force Base. Squadron Leader K. S. Patterson, of the Canadian Defense Liaison Staff, Washington, inspects the survival equipment of SSgt. Paul D. Swindell, an instructor at the TAC Sea Survival School.

In early 1965 at Langley AFB, the "ATLAS FILM CORPORATION" made eight SEA SURVIVAL TRAINING FILMS at the school.

Maj. Fred B. Ewing stated we had put through some 1300 crew members, 20 graduates had been forced to either bail out or ditch their aircraft at sea having all managed to survive. 14 bailed out at sea in Viet Nam and credited training at Langley (Sea Survival School) with saving their lives.



Whoever designed this patch for Life Support did an outstanding job.

The school had a lot of history. I only kept part of it. Maj Wayne E. Williams has most of it and the last time I talked to him he was living in Miami, Fl. working with Eastern Air Lines.

Maj. Fred B. Ewing and Maurice Jim Ouzts had some but they are deceased. Their families may have it.

Comments from Bob McElwain regarding Paul's account of the Sea Survival School

I asked Paul what LCM meant, why did the school move to Homestead AFB and where on the base was the school located? Below are his answers.

LCM is a Landing craft the Navy used to take men from the larger boat to put them on the beach. I should have said (LCM 8), sorry. The front drops down and you get off before you get shot. I know you have seen them in movies. We used it to Parasail off the deck.

We were told that moving to Homestead FL that we could operate 12 months per year and put through more crew members which we needed to because of the war in NAM. We could also have a larger classroom and larger facilities at TURKEY POINT which we did. Water was clear and warm. I wish I had a copy of the syllabus.

At Langley we were at the boat dock next to the NCO Club, so you know where most people went after work. Also our 1st class room was in the housing area in front of the club for a while and then we moved up on the base next to Flt line until we moved to Homestead.