



Dear Mr. Beck....I'm Frank Mogavero. I was an ADJ2 and served at Weapons Systems Test at Patuxent River 1967-69 just want to post this to honor the memory of my good friend ADJ1 Scott P (SP) Russell. We worked together at the Naval Air Test Center at Patuxent River, MD in 1967-69. He left WST and went to VP-44 in 1969. He was a good guy to work with, an outstanding mechanic – we pulled a lot of engines and props together. And above all, he was a decent person and a good friend. I often wondered over the years why I couldn't contact him. A few nights ago, I found this on VP-44 web page. I'm wondering if you could include these crew members on your fallen shipmates area?

Respectfully

Frank Mogavero.

Tribute to ADJ1 Scott Russell

Hello Mr. Beck,

Frank Mogavero, a close friend of my Uncle Scott Paul Russell, made me aware of your web site honoring the VP-44 Golden Pelicans. Frank recently submitted a tribute to Scott P. Russell which you added to the "*In Memory*" section of your site. Uncle Scott was killed in line of duty aboard VP-44 CAC 6 on June 3, 1972.

I have attached a few photos that I am hoping can be added to your website in memory of him:

The first is Scott Paul Russell's official Navy photo. It was taken in 1960 at the US Naval Training Center, Great Lakes, IL, when he was a member of the 1st Regiment, 13th Battalion, Company 185.



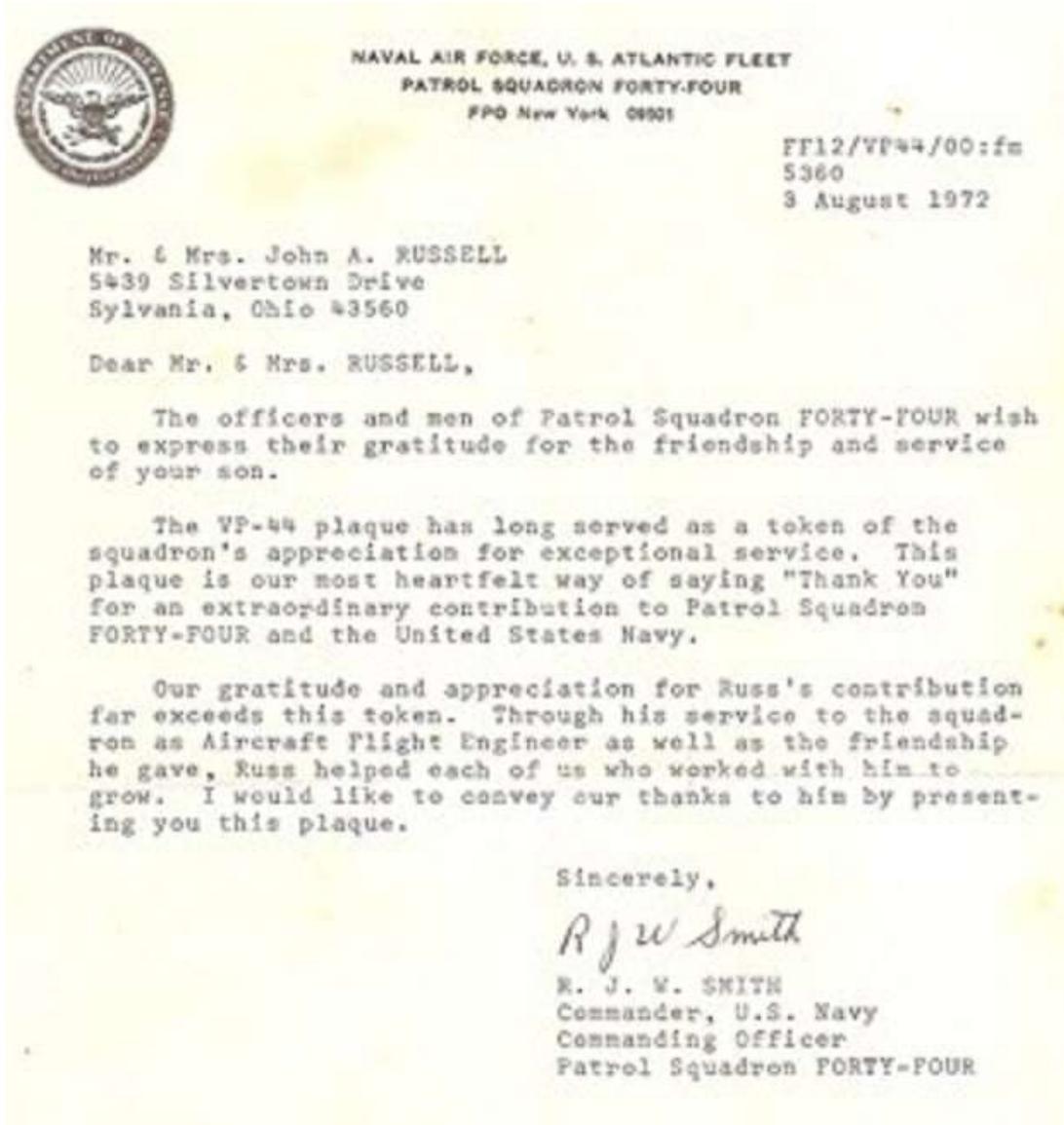
Tribute to ADJ1 Scott Russell

The second is of Scott with his wife, Kathy Appling Russell, when he was home on leave in Sylvania, Ohio in 1961. Scott and Kathy were blessed with two daughters, Reyna Marie Russell, born in 1962 and Rebecca Lynn Russell, born in 1964.



The third is a letter from Scott's VP-44 Commanding Officer, CDR R.J.W. Smith, to Scott's parents, John and Wilda Russell, in August 1971, two months after his death. I know the plaque that accompanied the letter was proudly displayed on the wall of their home in Sylvania, Ohio. I am presuming that it was given to one of Scott's daughters after John and Wilda passed away.

Tribute to ADJ1 Scott Russell



The fourth is a letter from Scott's Navy comrade, Phil Minor, to my mother, Scott's sister, Mary Lee Russell Small. Phil sent the letter in 1996, 24 years after Scott's death, explaining the details surrounding the crash of CAC 6. Finally, knowing the details of the incident gave my mother comfort of knowing that Scott was killed instantly and did not suffer. She is eternally grateful that the Navy persisted in their negotiations with the Moroccan government that allowed the bodies of those aboard the plane to be retrieved and brought home to rest.

Tribute to ADJ1 Scott Russell

Subject: VP-44 crash
Date: 96-07-21 12:27:02 EDT
From: PhilM8251
To: RKosbab

I'm certainly glad that I can be of help in trying to explain to Scott's sister what happened on that day. Flight engineers are very tight knit in a squadron so therefore I knew Scott Russell very well. The thing that I remember most about Scott, was that he was very tall and skinny and had very long fingers. We, in fact, called him "Fingers."

On the day of the crash, my crew was in Lajes (Azores). The squadron was split between Lajes and Rota (Spain). I was the FE on CAC 1 (the skippers crew). Scott was on CAC 6. His PPC (Patrol Plane Commander) was the safety officer, LCDR Mendenhall (I think that was his name, although I may be a little hazy on that one). I do remember that he was a very able pilot and was well liked by everyone. In fact, I had asked to be put on his crew just the week before because I was tired of flying with the Skipper. The skipper's crew always has to set an example. I wanted to be "just another pretty face." The Skipper denied my request (I am certainly glad of that now!!).

I remember on the crash day that my crew was standing the Ready One in the Azores. We were in the barracks resting and playing cards when the barracks master-at-arms passed the word that the XO wanted everyone in the TV lounge at 1700 that afternoon. I remember thinking, "that's pretty strange, I wonder if there has been a crash." I immediately put that out of my mind because P-3's just don't crash. Unfortunately that was not the case. At 1700 in June 1972 the XO told us that CAC 6 had hit a mountain in Morocco and all were dead. This of course, floored everyone. My PPC, the Skipper of the squadron (Cdr R.J.W. Smith) was in Rota when it happened. We had a replacement pilot in his absence. Since the CO of the squadron was my pilot, I was possibly privy to more info than "the man on the street." Through subsequent conversations with Cdr Smith I have pieced together what I feel is a pretty good scenario of that day. There was a lot of irony aboard that aircraft.

CAC 6 and another crew were going on a two plane detachment to Souda Bay, Crete and were to stay a few days. During their transit to Souda Bay, they were to fly a ten hour patrol in the Med with termination at Souda Bay. The weather was pretty bad (low ceilings and rain showers) when they took off. The other plane went first with Crew 6 to follow in about 15-20 minutes. If you look at a map of Spain, you will see that Rota is situated on the Atlantic side of the Straights of Gibraltar (the passage into the Med). Anytime an aircraft transits the Straights, it is always under positive control from air traffic control because there are three countries involved in this area and none of them particularly like one another (Spain, Britian, and Morocco). The first crew transited the Straights just fine. CAC 6 never even made it into the Straights. They apparently were too far south as they turned to the east to enter the Straights. This put them over Morocco (a country not very friendly with the US). Since the weather was pretty crummy, they had no ground visual reference. They hit a 1200' mountain in Morocco at about the 1,000' level. No one even knew that it had happened for about 4 hours. A fisherman reported the crash (they weren't very far over land). As soon as it was determined that it was our plane, the Skipper went to the crash site on the SAR helo and was immediately put under technical arrest by the Moroccons (he did not have diplomatic clearance into the country and had entered illegally). That was all eventually worked out. In the meantime the Moroccons would not let us go into the crash site and recover any bodies or equipment. That took four days before we were allowed in. In that length of time the Moroccons had the opportunity to examine and photograph the secret gear and publications that were aboard the aircraft (you have to remember that this was at the height of the cold war). There was not a lot left of the aircraft but some of the secret pubs did survive. There was quite a fire, as the aircraft was fully fueled (9,200 gal.) and the crash was about 15 min. after takeoff. We can only surmise why they were where they were. Probably just inattention for a brief period of time.

The irony: The second FE had just checked into the squadron from FE school. This was his first flight (his name was Comeau).

The pilot was the Safety Officer of the squadron.

The Radio Operator (Jansen) was a replacement. The regular operator was in the hospital with a bad back.

The Radar Operator had brought his girlfriend to Spain and they were to be married the next week.

There was a "ground pounder" aboard that hated to fly. He missed the C-130 that took the "ground pounders" to Souda Bay because he didn't have his shot card and they would not let him on. He was also scheduled to get out of the Navy in one month.

I had asked to be put on the crew but my request was denied. Whew!!

These are the things that I remember. It was a terrible time!! AD1 Scott Russell was my friend and there is not a week, after 24 years, that I don't think about the accident. It took me a long time to get closure on this.

I retired in July 1989 and even my last flights, at times, I could feel my friend's presence.

If I can be of any more help please let me know. My address is:

Phil Minor

Rt. 5, Box 482

Boone, NC 28607

Best regards,
Phil

Sunday, July 21, 1996 America Online: RKosbab Page: 1

Home PHONE 704/265-1243; WORK 704/265-6366

Tribute to ADJ1 Scott Russell

The fifth photo was taken at Scott's funeral in late June 1972. Our family lived in Moody, TX at the time of Scott's death and my mother was unable to attend the funeral in her hometown of Sylvania, Ohio, so her family sent this photo. I do not know the name of the Naval officer in the photo. I only know that it was one of Scott's close friends.



Scott was very dear to all who knew him. He was loving and funny and cared openly and deeply for his family and friends. To my mom, who will be 80 years old in November, he will always be her sweet, mischievous, baby brother and she still misses having him in her life. We all do.

Is it possible to have Scott's name added to the Fallen Shipmates list as well?

Tribute to ADJ1 Scott Russell

Scott Paul Russell

Rank: ADJ1

Served: 1960-1972

Duties: Flight Engineer

Life: 1941-1972

Rank Achieved: ADJ1

Thank you for creating a web site to honor the heroes of VP-44 and for including my Uncle Scott.

Sincerely,

Lauralee Jenkins