



RESPOT

Ed. Note: RADM James D. "Jig Dog" Ramage, USN(Ret), and ARM1/c (later CDR) David J. Cawley, USN(Ret), met in March 1997 to discuss the year that they flew with one another in VB-10, USS Enterprise (CV-6). Then-LCDR Ramage, commanding officer of VB-10 and radioman-gunner Cawley flew together in a number of actions, including the raid on Truk in February 1944, the attack on Saipan and the Battle of the Philippine Sea on 20 June 1944. Now, after 53 years, Ramage and Cawley recall their time together.

When LCDR James D. "Jig Dog" Ramage and ARM1/c David Cawley flew together in the Douglas SBD *Dauntless* half a century ago, they had the same life-sustaining interdependence as many of the Navy's other carrier pilots and aircrewmembers. Flying into the midst of kill-minded Japanese *Zeros* and warships, all bent on shooting them out of the sky, neither man could survive without the other. And they both knew it.

"I rode backward — he rode forward," Dave Cawley remembers. "You each see a completely different piece of the battle."

The fourth group of enlisted combat aircrewmembers inductees joined the Combat Aircrew Enlisted Roll of Honor at Patriots Point, Mt. Pleasant, S.C., on 11 November. It is fitting to remember the cause of it all: founder Jig Dog Ramage, his aircrewmember ARM1/c Cawley, and their brave fellow pilots and aircrewmembers in World War II and all wars thereafter.

Today RADM Ramage, the shelves and walls of his home filled with photographed honors and gleaming awards, remembers the rock-hard custom of his WW II years: The pilots got the glory and the aircrewmembers got virtually no mention at all. Period. It was the Navy way, and no one thought too much about it.

Some years ago, however, RADM Ramage decided that some retroactive recognition was appropriate — even essential — for the Navy and the country today:

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"Over the years I have felt that enlisted men, particularly combat aircrew, have been overlooked in getting credit for their fine performance of duty," Ramage says. He spoke with *Wings of Gold* and *The Hook* magazine editors about including combat aircrew wings in their publications. He wrote *Wings of Gold* concerning a March 1944 radio broadcast about the loss of a pilot — with no mention whatsoever of his aircrewmember, also lost; *Wings of Gold* published the letter.

Combat Aircrew Recollections

Teammates in a Deadly Business

by Terry Walton

As a selection committee member for the Carrier Aviation Hall of Fame at Patriots Point, Ramage urged that AMM1/c Bruno P. Guido be honored, a first in this august group of Naval Aviators.

A VB-10 SBD Dauntless circles above USS Enterprise (CV-6), March 1944. Then-LCDR "Jig Dog" Ramage, XO of Bombing 10, flew with radioman-gunner ARM1/c Dave Cawley in action against the Japanese at Truk and during the Battle of the Philippine Sea. More than 50 years later, Jig Dog conceived a memorial honoring the contribution of enlisted aircrewmembers, the Enlisted Combat Aircrewman Hall of Honor, on board USS Yorktown (CV-10) at Patriots Point, Mount Pleasant, S.C.



The first Combat Aircrew Roll of Honor dedication was held the very next year, on 10 October 1996, aboard the USS *Yorktown* (CV-10), Patriots Point. More than 450 combat aircrewmen have been honored thus far. Of his project's future, Ramage says: "In the long run, I hope there'll be thousands of names. That's what I wanted."

For the recollections that follow, Jig Dog Ramage and Dave Cawley sit comfortably around the living room of Ramage's home in Coronado, Calif., near San Diego. Cawley has just come for the occasion from his home in Indio, near Palm Springs. Jig Dog's wife Ginger offers coffee all around, and Jig Dog drinks his from an *Enterprise* mug.

Both men end up leaning forward in their chairs as they remind each other of their year together on *Enterprise*, including the noted February and April 1944 incidents at Truk as reported in *The Hook* (Winter 1993). The two also discuss getting together again after 40 years apart, and thereafter becoming, with their wives, friends with a remarkable kind of history.

Where did you come up with the first idea for the Enlisted Combat Aircrew Hall of Honor?

Ramage responds: "I first got the idea some years ago. . . . I was generally successful in getting [*Wings of Gold* editor] Zip Rausa and [*The Hook* editor] Steve Millikin to increase coverage for my idea in their magazines. My idea was simple — a candidate for the Hall of Honor must be enlisted, the experiences must have occurred in combat, and the act must have been distinctive. I wanted to honor those enlisted aircrewmen who had actually smelled cordite!"

There is a twinkle in Ramage's eye as he continues, "The Carrier Hall of Fame [Patriots Point] was part of it, yes, but before that it was a long-time thing in the back of my mind."

What are some of your recollections of flying together? How did you communicate with other planes in the air group?

Cawley speaks of maintaining radio silence. "We kept the HF radios in our *Dauntlesses* wired off — we had to maintain radio silence. There had better be a damn good reason if you landed with that wire on the HF radio broken."

On one occasion before the radios were wired off, Cawley recalls that an *Enterprise* aircrew left the HF radio on accidentally, broadcasting as the pilot and crewman talked on their intercom. Later on it was learned that the Japanese had copied their transmissions from 13 different locations to get an accurate fix on the precise location of the aircraft and the general location of the carrier.

That was in 1942. After that incident it was required that the HF radios be wired off.

Ramage adds that "Cawley handled all the communications from the back."

"I carried a six-inch Aldis light," Cawley says. "It had a trigger, so I could send Morse code using green and red and amber lenses, but I don't remember all the colors.

"And I used Morse code hand signals plane-to-plane," Cawley adds. He demonstrates by thumping the arm of the chair as he sends a

Above: Pilots and enlisted combat aircrewmen of Bombing Squadron Ten gather for a formal portrait on board *Enterprise*, July 1944. **Below:** ARM1/c David J. Cawley (right) prepares to fuel his *Dauntless* as LCDR Jig Dog Ramage vaults from the cockpit following strikes on Tarao in the Marshalls, 29 Jan '44.

message, an open hand for dash, a closed fist for dot. Ramage, almost always the flight leader, needed methods beyond the customary waggles and fishtailings to send nonstandard signals to others in his flight.

The pilot and gunner see entirely different things . . .

Ramage notes that "the gunner sees much more than the pilot — most of it bad. The pilot sees the target, and that's all he's interested in. [He's] pretty limited. The gunner, on the other hand, he sees it all."

With the gunner facing rearward while the pilot is focused to the front, it's likely the gunner can see more than 270 degrees, from the forward quarter astern to the opposite forward quarter. He's therefore likely, as Ramage indicates, to have more "big picture" information than the pilot.

"Yes," Cawley continues, "You each see a big piece of the picture, but a different piece. . . . I had a lot to do as Jig was





CAPT Ray Schultz, CHC, USN(Ret) delivers the invocation at the 11 Nov '99 ceremony on board USS Yorktown (CV-10) that inducted more than 220 new members into the Enlisted Combat Aircrewmen Roll of Honor. RADM James Flatley, USN(Ret), executive director of the Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum, is at right. Chaplain Schultz has been the spearhead for the Roll of Honor project for nearly five years.

setting up for the target. I would try to help go through the checkoff list to make sure we didn't miss anything. It's a difficult time — hectic. Usually, the planes are all around you getting ready to dive, and you have to find the target. Now, no matter how good the information was, the target isn't always there or it's gone somewhere else, and Jig gives me a pair of ten-power binoculars and says 'Tell me where the carriers are.'

In his chair, Cawley seems to be leaning up against the plane wall to steady himself, binoculars wedged against his eyes, trying to get a good look.

"I was comfortable," Cawley adds. "I knew he'd do everything he could to take care of the both of us. I'm sure things went on that you never were sure of. We didn't talk with each other much . . . we didn't have a throat mike to talk on the intercom — you had to reach for a hand-held mike hanging from a bracket to report 'There's someone breaking at . . .'"

Ramage interrupts. "These people are firing at us . . . there's an awful lot of stuff coming up and Dave's in the back seat watching a lot of this stuff and we're very low — that's the safest place to be after you pull out. And he's talking to me watching this stuff come and he says climb, and I climb."

Cawley continues: "I never will forget. Exactly at the moment he was talking about at the Battle of the Philippine Sea, we pulled out, dove on down to the water and made a left turn, and there was a heavy *Tone*-class cruiser.

"It was a very peculiar looking cruiser because its main battery turrets were all forward in a low, high, low, low, arrangement. Here we are going by it less than a half mile away at probably one hundred sixty miles per hour, fifty feet off the water, and these damn four turrets come around. All four of them! They had twin eight-inch guns in each of the four turrets, and they fired all eight guns directly at us!"

Cawley becomes more animated as he continues. "That's when I hollered, 'He's shooting at us!' and you turned, and the next thing I knew you were right on top of a destroyer. All the time this was going on there were *Zeros*, five or so *Zeros*, and there was so much anti-aircraft out

1999 Inductees Enlisted Combat Aircrewman Roll of Honor

The Class of 1999, 220 in number, join the 153 inductees honored in 1998 and the 77 inducted with the initial class in 1998. The impressive Roll of Honor on display on the hangar deck of USS *Yorktown* (CV-10), honors Enlisted Combat Aircrewmen of all wars and conflicts dating from World War II.

Inductees

John S. Albright
Leland G. Anderson
Michael Bandas
Robert P. Becker
Robert S. Biddle
Kerry R. Bignal
John R. Boyd Jr.
John W. Bruder
Robert D. Campbell
Theodore A. Chikowski
Frederick E. Cline
John G. Craven
Bruce B. Dallas
Robert N. Dellwo
Herman C. Edwards
Earl Ellis
John W. Furey
Plater T. Gedney
Alfred L. Gervasi
Ronald W. Graetz
Richard A. Greenwood
Robert L. Hagee
Calvin D. Harris

Charles W. Hodge
Alvin W. Hughes
Keith L. Johnson
Arthur L. Kaster
William P. Kazulis*
Arthur R. Kiefer
Donald H. Klunk
Richard C. Knoth
John W. Kraus
Frederick A. Lafser
Otis Lancaster
William J. Lares
Norman J. Lorentzen
Joseph A. Louvier
Raymond J. Mallett
Thomas E. Marshall
Thomas W. McCarthy
Fred K. Meche
Stephen R. Mihalovic
Jack Miller
Richard V. Morris Jr.
William H. Morrow
Edward J. Morthole

Thomas V. Mullen
John E. Noveskey
William P. Oberst
Alfred D. Olson
Raymond A. Peischl
Calvin W. Pierce
Roy J. Pintacura
Philip Pitruzello
Gene M. Poole
Alton C. Powell
Joseph A. Reyonlds
John D. Richards
Carl J. Schegel
Raymond W. Smith
Louis A. Sombati
Edmund G. Statkewicz
John K. Stewart
Charles F. Studley
Hilmer A. Sundberg
Frank S. Takach
Robert B. Tant
Willie B. Tucker
Roger C. Van Kammen
William B. Venegas
William G. Walters
Earl W. Ward
Donald West
Richard B. Weston
William A. Whiteside
Philip E. Whiting
James E. Williams
Caromel Wooton
Ira R. Zautner
Jilius F. Zimlich

Bombing Squadron Three

C.R. Bassett
H.D. Bennett
D.D. Berg
D.J. Bergeron
F.P. Bergeron
R.E. Coons
H.H. Craig
G.U. Dawn

there that they wouldn't come near us. They'd stay out about half a mile, and I don't know if you were aware that they were there. Were you?"

Ramage shakes his head. "No," he says. "The only ones that I saw after we got clear of the enemy fleet were those *Zeros* that were doing their air show. They were doing rolls. They looked beautiful. There were three or four of their carriers burning and they're out there doing rolls and formations, something like that.

"Go ahead and tell your part of it," he turns to Cawley. "You saw it right away and did something about it."

Cawley picks up the story. "Well, the leader of this group of roughly five *Zeros*, might have been four, they were in a gaggle. They were not in formation, just flying low. The leader is flying along at the same altitude we are, a little bit behind us, and all of a sudden he waggled his wings [at us] and he starts in. And I thought, *I have lots of ammunition and you're going to get every bit of it.* As soon as I start shooting, he pulls right back with his group and I don't know if he changed places with another one, but in a moment or two, another one waggles his wings and he starts toward us.

"So I say to myself that this worked before, and I start splattering him. Right when they start their turn, there's no deflection there and I was just pouring it at him. Whether one or two of us hit him or all of us hit him, I don't know, but they went back and got in formation.

"Then an F6F came along and took after those *Zeros*. It was the dankest F6F attack I ever saw. He dived down to the water — we were only about eight hundred feet high and he just rolled over — and mind you it is about two-thirds dark, depending on which way you look. Anyway, he dived down to water, got up a lot of speed and came right up under those *Zeros*. They obviously weren't very skilled.

"All of a sudden it was just like he flushed a bunch of quail and the Japanese all went different ways. But two of them went straight up, not together, and he flew up behind one of them. I've always said he didn't fire until he was two hundred feet behind him. . . . The truth is, I really don't think he fired one round until he was fifty feet behind that *Zero*. It blew completely up and the *Hellcat* flew right through the explosion. Later we found out that the pilot was LT Don 'Flash' Gordon of VF-10."

With all that was going on around you, did you ever have time to be scared?

Cawley and Ramage look at each other, and Cawley says, "We haven't ever talked together about these things. . . ."

Ramage, concurring with a nod, looks toward Cawley and picks up the discussion. "I can't answer for him, but . . . this is just a day's work. The only thing I wanted was to make damn sure I did a good job — I knew I wouldn't get another chance. As far as getting shot, I was always concerned about other guys getting hit. But I knew that I wasn't going to get it."

"In lasting recognition of the gallantry and self-sacrifice displayed by the many Enlisted Combat Aircrewmembers who teamed with their pilots, in whom they entrusted their fate, to engage the enemy in the air, on land and on the sea, no matter the odds. . . ."

— Combat Aircrew Roll of Honor plaque, Patriots Point

Turning to Cawley, "You feel the same way?"

Cawley hesitates not a moment. "Exactly the same. I just felt they couldn't hit me. You've gotta feel they can't hit you. If you feel they can, you'd better not be there. I just convinced myself of that."

Of some people having a fatalistic outlook and feeling themselves bulletproof, Ramage smiles in a self-deprecating way and adds, "I think it pays to be a little stupid."



W.E. Gallagher
J.J. Godfrey
J.L. Henning
D.F. Johnson
G.A. LaPlant
J.A. Shropshire
L.H. Till
S.K. Weaver
C.E. Zimmershead

Patrol Bombing Squadron 20, Crew 17

Frank A. Blengino *
Marvin L. Boock *
Wiley H. Edison *
Roger L. Foss *
Steve Kowach *
Gayle J. Moe *
Bernard F. Nelson *
John A. Walling *

Patrol Bombing Squadron 104, Crew Two

Allan B. Anania
Ernest E. Boyles
Adrian G. Fox
David R. Gleason
Lee D. Little
William D. Mathisen
Duffy N. McKenzie
Darral A. Pedigo
Arvid M. Rasmussen
Jack N. Saunders
Marx W. Stephan
Lee Webber
Thomas I. Yokum

Scouting Squadron Six

W.H. Bergin
D.W. Craig
J.D. Dance
Joseph F. DeLuca
Bruno F. Gaido
L.D. Hansen
D.L. Hoff
J.E. Howell
F.C. Jeck

T.F. Merritt
J.W. Snowden
W.H. Stambaugh
A.R. Stizelberger
T.R. Swindell

Bombing Squadron Six

E.R. Anderson
S.L. Duncan
G.W. Halterman
J.F. Heard
E.L. Hilbert
G.L. Holden
J.W. Jenkins
E.J. Keaney
Stuart J. Mason Jr.
S.A. Muntean
J.F. Murray
H.W. Nelson Jr.
J.M. Patterson Jr.
W.B. Steinman
C.R. Young

Composite Squadron 65

James W. Armstrong Jr. *
William H. Baldwin Jr.
Frank G. Bristol *
Leland S. Burton
James E. Cavanaugh
Jules V. Chamberlin Jr.
L.O. Chapman
John S. Crolek
Charles B. Coker
Howard E. Dolliver
Joseph A. Downs
Harold H. Foote *
Lester U. Frederickson
John R. Gibney
William R. Gibson
Raymond W. Henderson *
Richard C. Hess
John Humphries
James P. King
Jack Lock

John J. Loebe
Billie D. Marsh
Roy A. McAnally *
Eugene J. Monahan
Mason H. Moore *
Philip P. Rae
Victor J. Seibert
Jack L. Shepler *
Leslie V. Shodo
Roger Slater
James E. Smith *
Thaddeus Soja *
John E. South
John H. Stein *
Ray S. Thomas
Raymond J. Travers
George E. Walck
Donald E. Welsh
Edward R. Williams Jr.
Floyd B. Wright
Eugene W. Zepht *

Bombing Squadron 83

Joseph F. Brophy
Gardner N. Brown
Harold F. Cadieux
Michael A. Cappiello
W.M. Driscoll *
Joseph M. Eardley *
William C. Goodno
Joseph G. Hubner
Manny Levine
Arne W. Lorentzen *
Carl W. MacDougall
A.M. Matheny *
R.J. Melinski *
Walter L. Owens
C.C. Robertson *
Richard L. Shay
William W. Sterner
Harry J. Sullivan
William T. Winters *

* Killed in action



How about your relationship on the ship, once you're out of the cockpit?

"We led two different lives," Ramage states. "We ate in separate messes and lived in separate parts of the ship, which is still true in the fleet today. Around the ready room, of course, we'd have a cup of coffee or listen to that damn radio as a group."

Cawley: "I think the ready room was the only place where we made contact. That was pretty much it."

Ramage: "We didn't get any liberty, but we used to do an awful lot of drinking of beer. Mainly on Majuro."

Cawley: "I wasn't a drinker in those days. I'm not looking down on it, but I was young and my mother asked me not to drink and I didn't."

When asked how old each was at the time of their year together, Cawley frowns and looks toward the ceiling. "Well, let's see. We started fighting together in 'forty-three, so I hadn't turned twenty. I was nineteen-and-a-half."

Ramage adds, "I was about twenty-seven, and I was a squadron commander leading thirty-six planes."

What is your function as Jig Dog is rolling over on his back to pick up the target?

Cawley: "First, he's going to start his dive and I want to make damn sure he's going to get the bomb armed. I try to help go through the checkoff list to make sure we don't miss anything. It's a very difficult and hectic time. Usually, the planes are all around you and they're going to get in echelon for the dive, and you've got to find the target."

"Now, no matter how good the information was, the target wasn't there or it's gone somewhere else, and so I always carried a pair of ten-power glasses and he would grill me, 'What do you see? And is there a carrier? Is there a big ship? What do you see?'"

"As best I could, I'd study this place out through the split screen and sometimes, to see the target, you got to stand clear outside [the cockpit] and wear a gunner's belt, just a one-inch belt snapped onto your waist."

"And now your guns. What are you going to do with your guns? Well, just before you're going to dive is the most susceptible time if you're attacked. Should you secure your guns or should you leave them out? Well, I'd lay them down. They were half secured and half not secured, [I'm] looking through the binoculars, going through the check-off list, making sure that everything in the back seat is secured for a dive. All of a sudden you're diving."

Ramage: "And when you're diving, you're committed."

Cawley: "Sometimes I'd still be standing up. Quite often, I'd still be standing up and we'd roll over and start down. I'd hook a knee under one side of the ring that surrounds the gunner's station, and that kept me from falling out. Once we're into the dive, you fall back, you can even get your guns or you can fully secure your guns."

Ramage: "There's a period where you're on your way down in a dive. You're just hanging there, and if the plane's bilges are dirty, the stuff there all comes up around you."

Cawley: "If you've been shooting, the spent cartridge cases fall into the bilges. There was a place where you could kick this brass into a hole and step on a lever and drop it out. But you couldn't do that all the time because there was often a whole formation below you."

"So you'd have to be careful with all the brass and stuff. Of course, the cockpit cover is wide open. It was a busy time, and when I first began as a tailgunner, I was the first to admit that I wasn't very effective."

"But we got so we were good at it. I mean, writing notes [while we were] going straight down. . . ."

Once you were through flying together, you obviously kept in touch?

Ramage: "Not all the time. I don't remember exactly when we got back in touch."

Cawley: "I can tell you almost to the day. To make a long story short, I ultimately got to flight school and got out of the service, went to work for the telephone company. Worked for them for thirty-six years and after about forty years, I'm down here on vacation in San Diego and I said I bet a dollar that Ramage is retired and living in Coronado. He'd go to Coronado — I know damn well he would. So I got the phone book and looked him up — sure enough, there he was. Ramage, J.D., Admiral, Retired. So I called him up."

Ramage and Cawley, back and forth: "We had been out of touch for forty-some years. . . . Now we see each other two or three times a year. We miss a year, then we make up for it, with meetings three or four times a year."

How do you feel about being nominated for the Enlisted Combat Aircrew Roll of Honor?

"Well, I feel proud." Silence. "That's about it. Proud."

"We were just doing a job we were trained for. You immediately start thinking of all your friends that were with you [puts his arms in a big circle and draws them in] — you want to bring them all. And you wonder, do I deserve it as much as they do?"

