

AGCM Claude “Moon” Mullen, USN RET



Moon is the last one of the original group that started the NWSA in Lakehurst, NJ in 1975.

Claude Mullen joined the U.S. Navy in October, 1948 and received basic training at NTC Great Lakes, IL in Recruit Company #404. A couple future acquaintances, Jim Tilley and Hunter Janesch, were in Recruit Companies, #411 and #418, respectively. After basic training in January 1949, Claude was assigned to NAS Quonset Point, RI and his primary duty was driving aircraft refueling trucks (no buses yet).

In June 1949 Claude was selected as an “Aerographer’s Mate striker”, which he thought was a flying photographer. Nope, it meant meteorologist, but he did get to fly regularly! His duties also included entering weather map data from code, taking hourly weather observations. He went to nearby Brown University on weekends for all football games (great liberty for a single sailor!).

In September 1950 Claude advanced to Aerographer’s Mate Third Class (AG3) and was transferred to Atlantic Fleet Weather Central, Norfolk, VA. That December he reported on board the USS Coral Sea (CVB-43), homeported in Norfolk. Shortly after reporting the ship went to the Mediterranean for 7 months and while on board Claude’s specialized in taking balloon soundings to 60,000 FT.

He was transferred in November 1951 to the USS Block Island (CVE-106), which was homeported in Philadelphia, PA. While on board, the ship toured the Caribbean. In March 1952 he was transferred to the USS Rehobeth (AGS-50), which performed oceanographic research to develop Anti-Submarine Warfare technology. Claude looked for storms to take samples of the bottom and took water temperature and salt content to test underwater sound transmission. While recording bottom depth, he discovered an uncharted underwater peak off Norway, which is now named “Moon’s Peak” on charts. As a single sailor on liberty in Iceland, Copenhagen, Trondheim Norway, Antwerp, Glasgow and Belfast, it was tough duty.

In October 1952 Claude was discharged from the Navy with promotion to AG2. He had never drove a tractor-trailer before, but bought one from an acquaintance, Herbie Hackman, 12 days later. He then started carrying explosives to 42 states. As a USN reserve he carried his uniform and attended reserve meetings in Ohio, New Orleans, Chicago, Florida, and elsewhere. In December of 1952, while transporting 24,000 LBS of explosives, he hit a Mack diesel head-on carrying 29,000 LBS of hogs. There

was no fire in the Cedar Rapids, IA accident, so there was no well-done bacon. Claude still has physical effects of that accident. While there getting the tractor-trailer fixed Claude met **Nadine June Klindt** on a blind date. The result has been 65 years of shopping—MasterCard, VISA, etc., san Lloyds of London.

In June 1953, Claude moved Nadine to live with his parents in Centre Valley. He had started driving trucks for Modern Transfer of Allentown, PA. He attended Navy reserve meetings in Willow Grove. In September, Nadine said, “no more single sailor liberty” and they were married by Joe Haines, Justice of the Peace. In October 1954 a daughter, **Pamela**, was born. They were living alongside of the Tilley’s in Centre Valley.

Claude went on active duty USNR in October 1955 at Willow Grove, PA. He was flying again, sending weather observations and he began forecasting. He took bi-annual tests for advancement, but US President “Ike” said, “no openings needed now – we’re at peace with the world.” In October 1957 Claude was discharged, but attended monthly reserve meetings as a forecaster/observer. He was working full time as a dispatcher for Associated Transport in Allentown. In February 1959 Claude and Nadine’s second child, son **Jeffrey**, was born. March of 1959 found Claude back on the road with explosives hauling in 43 states. He attended reserve meeting anywhere from Denver to Boston. He was driving 11,000 miles per month and making great money, but not home much.

In June 1960 Moon returned to active duty USN with orders to Trinidad, BWI. The following September Nadine and the kids moved to Trinidad. While in Trinidad he achieved the best upper air sounding records in the USN. Moon briefed pilots during the Cuban missile crisis and worked research projects in Barbados/Trinidad for Florida State Univ., UCLA, and Weather Bureau. Saturday nights he was “The Trinidad Nite-Mayor“ disk-jockey (11 PM-3 AM) for Armed Forces Radio, WVDI, Moon was Manager of Operations and played second base for the Naval Station fast-pitch softball team.



**AG B Class 6325, AG1 Claude R. “Moon” Mullen, Jr., USN
Front Row Standing, 5th from Left**

In June 1963 Claude was transferred to Lakehurst, NJ for advanced forecast/analyst school. AGCM Joe McKinzie was also in that class and the Chief did his best to keep them apart. Following Lakehurst in January 1964, AG1 Mullen was ordered to the USS Wasp (CVS-18), homeported in Boston, which cruised in the Caribbean and Mediterranean. While on the Wasp, Moon briefed the Captain and OPS officer at 7 PM, did News, Sports and Weather each evening at 7:30 PM on the ship’s PA system, then briefed the Admiral at 9:30 PM. He was the weather office’s supervisor and forecaster. The office set upper air quality records (second place) in both the Atlantic and Pacific fleets. As manager of the ship’s fast-pitch softball team, the team won the first Naval District Championship.

January 1965 found Moon transferred to the Naval Oceanographic Office (Aerial Ice Reconnaissance) in Washington, DC. In May he was the mission leader for *Argentia*, Newfoundland's detachment flying 1200+ hours over Baffin Bay. The task was plotting ice and guiding ships which were resupplying Arctic bases (Thule et al). Claude received a Commendation from the Oceanographer of the Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard. During Project *BirdsEye* he participated in flights over the North Pole, Alaska, Greenland, Iceland, Norway and the White Sea. He was also unofficially flying the planes as co-pilot trainee...and loving it!

In September 1966 Moon made Chief Petty Officer and was transferred to Fleet Weather Central, Norfolk as Assistant Forecast Duty Officer. While there he briefed pilots, did forecasting for ships at sea without crew forecasters and prepared weather charts for facsimile transmission. He umpired 10 ball games per week and started the Navy Norfolk Flying Club, serving as manager-check pilot.

Claude was transferred to VW-1 Typhoon Trackers, Guam in March 1969 and served as the Leading Chief for 30+ officers and Aerographers. He made crew assignments, trained and tested flight crews for penetrating typhoons. Moon did oceanographic/meteorological recon from Singapore to Japan to Hawaii and all points in between. He spent 747 hours over North Vietnam while flying every 2 weeks out of ChuLai and DaNang, which made it hard to play much softball. He was advanced to Senior Petty Officer and flew as Flight Meteorologist, teaching newly assigned officers how to penetrate typhoons safely! He actually piloted Constellation aircraft over 800 hours, including two low-level (below 1000 FT) penetrations of full-blown typhoons. At the time Nadine was the manager of the Guam Navy Flying Club and Moon flew charters for the Sangley Point, PI Navy Flying Club. When not flying over North Vietnam, he returned to a previous profession by driving 18-wheelers filled with explosives. Claude recalls that China Beach never looked like what it did on the TV show. As a result of his 997 total flight hours over North Vietnam, Moon received two air medals.

In June 1971 VW-1 was decommissioned. Moon was then transferred to NAS Agana Guam's weather office as Senior Watch Officer (2nd in command). He briefed all military and civilian flights out of Guam, including Air Force One for President Nixon's flight to China. Moon coordinated for months with China so they could work together when the plane left Guam. He continued as a check-pilot for the Navy Flying club there, plus being the manager of the Chief's softball team. Moon also flew monthly flights in the cockpit with TWA, PanAm, AirMicronesia, Continental and JAL for one year. He had his 13 year old son Jeff ready to solo while the family was on Guam.

In May 1972 daughter Pam graduated from high school. Following that milestone in the Mullen's family life, Moon was transferred to the Pacific Missile Test Range, Pt. Mugu, CA as Leading Chief and Senior Forecaster. He was then advanced to Master Chief Aerographer's Mate (one of 12 in the USN), became Weather Center Officer and was authorized by the Chief of Naval Operations to fly as a co-pilot in certain naval aircraft. He performed research and classified missions and flew civilian-chartered aircraft for the USN. As a collateral duty, Moon was assigned Casualty Assistance Claim Officer, which meant he was to notify next-of-kin in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties in the event of death of military personnel. He was to assist dependents, parents, or spouse with burial and funeral arrangements. If that wasn't enough, Claude umpired six games per week and played fast-pitch and slow-pitch softball. He managed a Senior Little League team to a southern California championship.

In May 1975 Moon was transferred to the Bureau of Naval Personnel, Washington, DC as Personnel Assignments Officer for all 1600+ Aerographer's Mates in the USN. As a Detailer his duties were transferring personnel for assignments to ships and world-wide Naval Weather activities, including for specialized and advanced training. He visited USN commands throughout the world. Utilizing FAA

licenses as a Commercial, Instrument and Multi-Engine pilot since 1967, Claude flew aircraft from Quantico Marine Flying Club and continued flying with the family around the eastern USA.

In February 1978 Claude received an offer to be Manager of Meteorology for Continental Airlines, but he has to accept the offer immediately. In October Moon retired from the USN with 30 years of service. The following day he started in LA as Meteorologist for Continental Airlines. He briefed all pilots at LAX, prepared nation-wide forecasts for company airports and routes, disseminated preferred routes to avoid turbulence with best possible route speeds, and issued storm warnings. Moon conducted meteorology training for pilots and airport managers.

A new CEO took over Continental in February 1983 and furloughed 1500 employees. Moon received 35 minutes notice! Not ready to give up his weather career, He made tapes for ABC TV and interviewed at 7 places in TX, FL, IL and New England, but all offered 6-12 month contracts until "ratings" come out, so he declined offers to do TV weather. The family was no longer interested in frequent relocations after the moves with the USN (Nadine exaggerated—she said 20, but they only moved 19 times!).

May 1993 found Moon under contract with Weather Central, Madison WI, as a senior forecaster quality controlling and training Univ. WI meteorology students, who were working as employees. Forecasts were issued for 42 radio stations in the central US, 5 TV stations, an Alaskan oil company, the Milwaukee Braves, Green Bay Packers, WI-Bell telephone, and numerous golf, marina and agricultural concerns The owner was taking unfair advantage of employees, so Moon resigned Sept. 1st .

In October 1983 Moon accepted a GS-9 Met. Tech. position at San Nicolas Island (test island for Pacific Missile Test Center, Pt. Mugu) specializing in upper atmosphere soundings. Soon he was transferred to Pt. Mugu as a GS-10 briefing classified operations, When President Reagan's Air Force One landed at Pt. Mugu, Moon would give the weather report to the pilot. Reagan's ranch was near Santa Barbara and he would give the weather for that. Also, sometimes President Reagan would come into the weather office and chat. He was the OpConductor for only meteorology rockets on the West coast, supporting USAF, USN and NASA missions. After Desert Storm, Nadine finally found out what Moon had been doing for the past 4 years when Tomahawk missiles were used successfully (and seen on CNN). He continued performing research with MIT, UCLA, Canadian Air Forces, Natl' Weather Service and USN at various project locations from Florida to Midway Island and ships out of San Diego naval base. Somewhere along the line Moon was advanced to GS-11.

June 1989 found Moon taking over Helicopter Atmospheric Measurements (HAM) from Applied Physics Lab of John Hopkins Univ., leasing Bell Jet Long Range helicopters. He attached atmospheric measuring instruments for operations in Kauai HI, Puerto Rico, Pt. Mugu and NASA on east coast. In the process he accumulated 293,000 frequent flyer miles with American and 50,000+ with other airlines. Due to a shortage of personnel he was told he'd have to stop flying and go back to forecasting. In his leisure time he managed and played shortstop on a 60+ softball team for 4 years. He also played on Lihue and Kauai teams while there.

In November 1995 Moon retired from the Dept. of Defense. Son Jeff decided he had to keep dad off the streets. They both opened a Mail Boxes Etc. franchise in Simi Valley, CA dba as Jeff Mullen & Dad. Now retired Moon only had to work 60 hrs. per week. He started playing 3rd base on a 65+ softball team. They won 42 games in a row. The previous year, playing 2nd base, he only played in tournaments. They went to Salt Lake City and came back #2 in the USA.

Moon and Jeff had their Mail Boxes Etc. franchise until 2006 when their contract ran out and they sold the business. Moon then became a docent at the Reagan Presidential Library. He now works in the Air Force

One that was President Reagan's. He used to give tours and work in different parts of the library. Moon played international softball from 2000 to 2013. He played all around Europe, Africa, S. America, Caribbean and Asia. He played softball with the USA team all around the world...Europe, Africa, South America, Caribbean and Asia. One particular time in France, they were on TV playing the French team (beat them). He played and umpired around Thousand Oaks until a couple of years ago.

Since 1990 Moon has been writing a travel column for the Aerograph. He hopes to get back to HAM flying again for a contractor...soon!



Moon wants everyone to know how much Nadine has put up over the past 65 years, acting as both mom and dad during most of those years (She said I'd rather put up with incoming rockets in DaNang than help move to another home...denied!). She has did the shopping, put Pam through 7 different schools and Jeff through 9, disciplined and took care with outstanding results! Pam is in the payroll department of Litton Corp. and family (2 grandsons) live in Simi Valley. Jeff was an honor graduate of Auburn Univ. with a degree in Aeronautical Engineering, flew F-14s (like Tom Cruise) for 9 years, resigned as LCDR and now flying out of the LA area as a pilot with American Airlines, living in San Diego. We've traveled to Europe each fall (so I see ice and snow) since 1989, one trip to Puerto Rico to play senior softball, plus a week on the "Love Boat", various softball tournaments in the western US, and except for the first 5-6 kidney stones, **wouldn't change a minute!! Nadine has got us to this point in life!! It's been exciting!**