

GT-3 Canary Island

My assignment for this mission was a dual one. The first was to coordinate with the Spanish and US military located in Las Palmas, Canary Island for recovered crew and spacecraft transit thru there if a landing occurred in the eastern Atlantic. The crew and vehicle would have been brought to Las Palmas by a DD stationed at the various eastern Atlantic landing sites. I have two strong memories from that one. The Spanish military considered any NASA type a hero and my contact, a colonel, grabbed me around the back of my neck and planted a kiss on my forehead when we were introduced. Another memory, I had been given a Collins suitcase SSB radio to use to communicate with the US, but shortly after arrival I was instructed to give the radio to someone from the CIA who supposedly needed it for something in Africa.

My second assignment would have been activated if the spacecraft landed in Africa. The crew and aircraft for this was a C-130 to depart out of Las Palmas with a NASA doctor, about 6 special forces types, and myself aboard. The C-130 had a helo aboard with one rotor blade removed. The plan was for the special forces and myself to jump on the spacecraft. The special forces were to secure the area, and I was to safe the spacecraft. The C-130 was to land at some nearby location, assemble the helo, fly the doctor to the landing site, and fly the crew and doctor back to the C-130. Sounds far out but that was the plan. My plan was to stay in the C-130, ride the helo to the landing site, and do whatever was needed.

As I recall there was another NASA recovery member assigned to a search aircraft, a DC-6 type, which covered the eastern Atlantic and flew out of Las Palmas.

After the mission the east Atlantic DD did come to Las Palmas, and I got a ride on that to Lisbon (Portuguese) where the locals placed me under house arrest because I had left Las Palmas (Spanish) without a departure stamp in my passport. The local consul agent fixed that after 4 days. Another recovery type was aboard that DD, but I do not remember who.

July 28, 2019

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