

## REMEMBERING ED O'BRIANT (1937-2014)

Our good friend and LRD veteran, Ed O'Briant, passed on August 13, 2015, and will be missed. Following are a few remembrances of Ed by his LRD friends:

Grady Henderson - T.E. was an interesting person. I always figured Ed had a Shuttle Orbiter in his garage! He was a unique person. We didn't see Ed often, in fact the last time I saw him was at the LRD get together some 2 years ago.

Milt Heflin - I think he was like the "scrounger" in the movie "The Great Escape" played by James Garner, or like a savvy Air Force Master Sergeant, or maybe a crafty Navy Chief...TEO simply got things done! He didn't dilly-dally around...if you needed some hardware or you needed something done, he made it happen! Rod Loe recently shared a TE O'Briant story with me...when the personnel reassignments were playing out with the disbandment of LRD, Ed ended up for a while in a Branch run by Rod. Of course we are all aware of Ed's ability to find stuff and get things done...when Ed walked into Rod's corner office for the first time, right after the handshake Ed looked around Rod's office and asked him, "hey, you want some drapes and carpet?!" One of the best I've ever been around that took care of so many seemingly minor things that collectively made a huge difference to the success of our recovery operations...I wish I could have shared that with him.

Mike Collins - Ed contributed a lot to the success of the Apollo Program. He was a good friend and happened to be from my home town of El Campo and was an excellent personal mentor to me.

Mel Richmond - I am saddened by Ed's passing. He was one of the good guys. I remember him for making sure we had all the equipment/tools/supplies needed on the ship.

John Stonesifer - As many of you expressed, I too am sorry to learn of Ed's passing. We missed him at our late get togethers. We all enjoyed working with Ed and depended on him so many times in our careers. Ed knew how to get things done with little delay, knew where within JSC the help came from and was clever in solving our hardware problems throughout the necessary testing. I agree with Mel's comment that Ed always assured us that the proper equipment plus spares were always aboard the ships. Ed assisted us after our early program deployments to be independent of ship's company once aboard for supplies and minor equipment. As I remember he was a contributor to coming up with the idea of utilizing the large shipping containers for us to arrive at the Primary ship knowing we were fully supplied for all that would be needed. One story I will always remember was the departure from our assigned tasks when Ed came to our rescue and supplied us with a shipping container to fill with Hawaiian pineapples. Prior to that we were usually restricted to bring only a few through

customs. This time we filled the container with crates of pineapples from the warehouse, placed them aboard an aircraft for return to Houston. I hope many of you shared in the fruit.

Dave Peterson - It is saddening to learn of the passing of an LRD'er. Ed was a good guy.

Buddy Culbertson – Ed was a very capable engineer and a very nice person. I am very sorry to hear of his passing. Ed seemed to be able to get anything needed. One example is we were playing volley ball on the deck of the recovery ship. Someone on the ship knocked the last volley ball overboard. We contacted Ed and told him the story. A few days later a sack of volleyballs was delivered. That was only one very small example of Ed's capability.

Paul Kruppenbacher - My first thought was how easy-going Ed was in getting work done. A true gentleman and dedicated co-worker, I smile to reflect on working with Ed. Yes, we truly miss good folks like Ed.

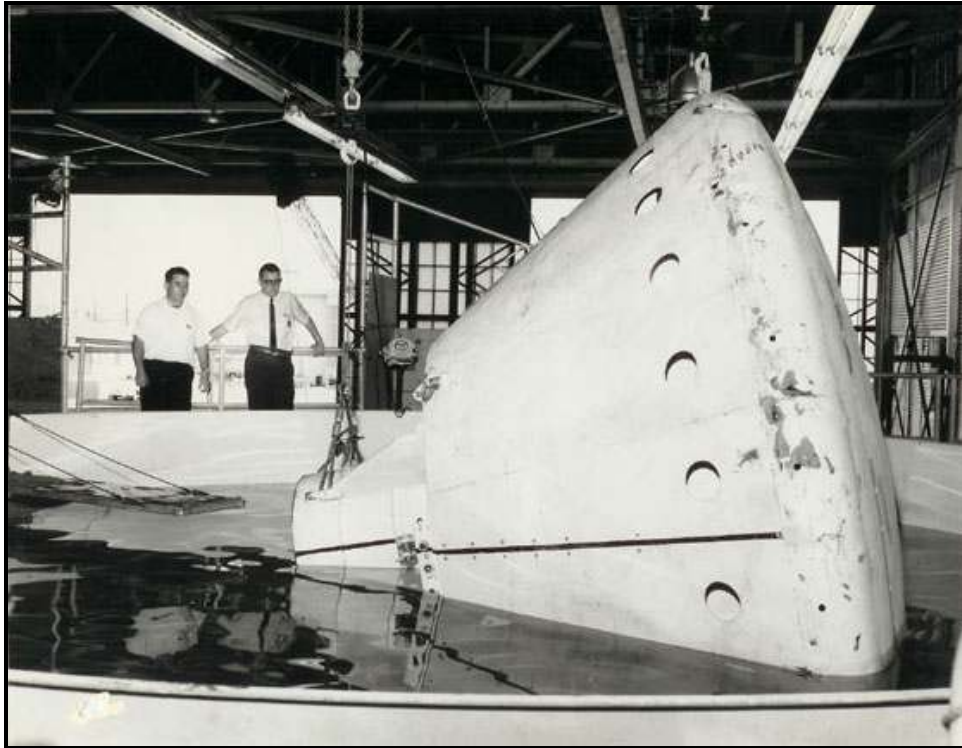
I'd like to add a footnote to Buddy's comments on Ed replacing volleyballs on the recovery ship. I was in that game (NASA vs. Navy), and after that ball bounced across the hanger bay, over the starboard elevator, and into the Pacific, the game ended and I went to the fantail as I often did, to watch the ship's wake and just relax. There I found a sailor on the starboard stern with a pair of binoculars wrapped around his neck. I asked him what he was doing and he explained he was on a "watch". I then asked what he was watching for and he said, "submarine periscopes and the like". I then asked if he'd seen anything lately. He said no, nothing at all. It shook my confidence in the system since a bright white volleyball has passed by but a few minutes ago! Also, one of our hanger bay volleyball games ended abruptly when a serve went straight up, it one of the large overhead lights, which broke loose and came crashing to the floor! Between that event and the occasional calls over the comm system that the ship was making a hard turn, and watching the sailors scramble to get away from the walls which had stores secured overhead (and I guess which occasionally broke free!), I felt shipboard duty was at least as hazardous as that aboard the spacecraft.

Al Ong - Ed was a fine gentleman, easy going, a lot of fun to work with and a great person in LRD. We will miss him and may he rest in peace.

Hardie Barr - I was working on the human bio sample return container and came across an article about a small battery with just exactly what I needed. I contacted the manufacturer and asked how we could get one. They are for "Military Only Use", I was told, and my best persuasion ("NASA practically the same priorities as military, etc.") wouldn't budge them. I happened to mention my disappointment to Ed O'Briant, and the next morning when I came to work, there was one of the batteries on my desk. Ed said he, "knew nothing about it".

C. Mac Jones - I worked with Ed on projects from the time I started at NASA and LRD in 1964. I was a project engineer in charge of test vehicle preparation, and Ed was the test conductor. I have a couple of my early photos with Ed and BP-25 in October 1964 (Photo #1) and BP-1101 in April 1965 (Photo #2). He was a take-charge type of guy and knew how to get things done one way or another, hook or crook, etc., and I learned a lot from him. The last time we worked together was on Lunar Quarantine Return, the logistics to get the crew and samples from Ellington to the LRL in 1969-70. Ed was in charge, and it was fun working with him...of course Ed did his usual excellent job. The last time I talked to Ed was when I was researching some LRD history, and Ed was very helpful as always, and he also told me he had Parkinson's.

February 9, 2015



**Photo #1:** Ed O'Briant and C. Mac Jones with Apollo BP-25 during static stability measurement in tank test at Ellington Hangar-135 in October 1964. (Photo Credit: NASA S-64-26778)



**Photo #2:** Ed O'Briant & C. Mac Jones during Apollo BP-1101's initial weight & C.G. at Ellington Hangar-135 in April 1965. (Photo Credit: NASA S-65-35838)