

LRD's Whirling Dervishes

Whirling Dervishes* was the characterization of the elite Project Engineering Group of the Systems Evaluation Section/Recovery Systems Branch/Landing and Recovery Division during the Apollo Program in the latter 1960's and documented by group lead Paul Chaput's memorandum¹ on March 29, 1967. (Thanks to Milt Heflin's saving of this unique piece of LRD history.)

"Code Names" for the group were:

Paul Chaput, Lead – Typhoon (RIP, 2016) (See Photo #1)

C. Mac Jones - Cyclone

Mike Sellers (USAF Detailee) – Hurricane (RIP, 2016)

Harry Clancy – Tornado (RIP, 2020)

Milt Heflin - Waterspout

Mike Collins - Whirlwind

Randy Stone – Twister (RIP, 2013)

Project engineering projects of the Whirling Dervishes group included: Apollo water test vehicles BP-25, BP-1101/1101A, BP-1102/1102A, BP-29/29A, and CM-007/007A; Apollo Flotation Collar and Recovery Raft; Biological Isolation Garment (BIG); Apollo Launch Site Recovery Jammed Hatch Kit; and many smaller recovery systems projects.

The Whirling Dervishes were a great team of guys working to support the mission of Landing and Recovery Division during the Apollo Program. The four who are no longer with us will always be remembered for their dedication, contributions, and friendship.

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*Definition: To call someone a **Whirling Dervish** is to say that the person resembles a spinning top or is wild in his/her movement and displays boundless amounts of energy. This begs the question: "How do the dervishes manage to keep balance and not get dizzy?" First, they slowly increase the number of turns tricking the brain to become less and less sensitive to the impulses it receives.

References

1. "Security Code Names", memorandum dated March 29, 1967 (authored by Paul Chaput) (<http://www.jonessite.net/upload/LRD/stories/WhirlingDervish/WhirlingDervishesMemo.jpg>)

Photos

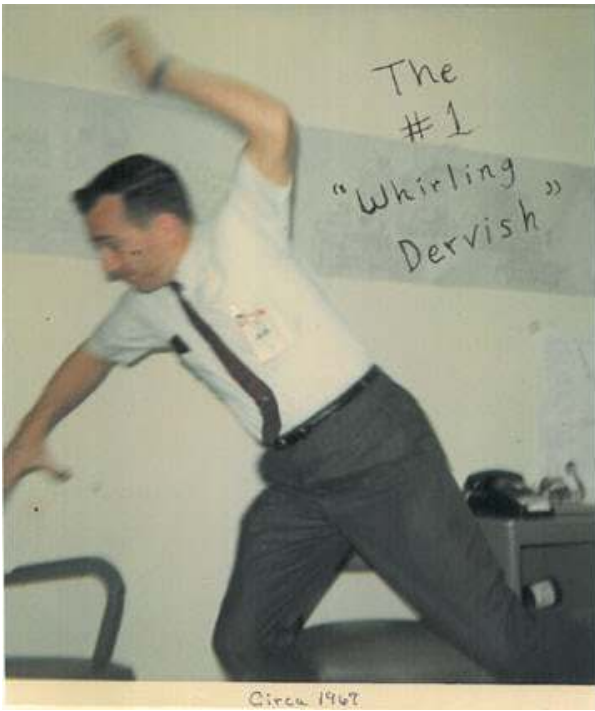


Photo #1: Paul Chaput in mid-whirl, circa 1967
(Photo Credit: Personal Photo of Paul Chaput)