



*Institutions in Crisis*

# TAILHOOK '91 AND THE U.S. NAVY

Joslyn Ogden

It is the early 1990s, and the Navy is experiencing significant change. There is increasing pressure to assimilate women into the full array of occupational opportunities. In this context, Lt. Paula Coughlin reports that she has been sexually harassed at the 1991 annual symposium of the Tailhook Association. Further, the Association itself acknowledges widespread harassment and property destruction at the Symposium. These reports gain notoriety – first within the naval hierarchy and then through the national media. Two official naval investigations ensue, but despite a significant outpouring of time and financial resources, the investigation turns up only two suspects. The Department of Defense then conducts another, more thorough investigation that leads to the citation of over 140 junior aviators for participating in the harassment and other unbecoming conduct. Several top leaders of the Navy, including the Secretary of the Navy, the Navy Judge Advocate General, the Navy Inspector General, and the Chief of Naval Operations either retire early, resign, or are reassigned to less prestigious posts.

The *Institutions in Crisis* case studies provide students of ethics, organizational studies, crisis management, and institutional analysis with opportunities to explore the dynamics of organizations experiencing change, ethical crisis, and evolution. For more information on the set of case studies, please visit the following website:  
<http://kenan.ethics.duke.edu/education/case-studies-in-ethics/institutions-in-crisis/>.

*This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution - Noncommercial - No Derivative Works 3.0 Unported License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>. You may reproduce this work for non-commercial use if you use the entire document and attribute the source: The Kenan Institute for Ethics at Duke University.*

## Introduction

On Thursday, September 5, 1991, the Las Vegas Hilton was gearing up for the Tailhook Association's notorious annual symposium.<sup>1</sup> Large conference rooms were being set up for panels of top Navy officers speaking to crowds of junior officers; Lockheed Martin and other defense contractors were setting up elaborate displays showing the latest innovations in flight technology; and 22 squadron commanders and their crews were checking into their hospitality suites on the third floor preparing for the big parties soon to begin.

Capt. Frederic Ludwig, the president of the Tailhook Association, was anticipating the best convention yet with 5,000 people attending – primarily active fighter pilots but also large numbers of retired pilots and some civilians. Ludwig was unprepared for the maelstrom created by the late-night parties on the third floor after which 83 women and 7 men reported being sexual assaulted or harassed. Tailhook '91<sup>2</sup> would soon become infamous as a catalytic event whose fallout resulted in the dismissal of several high-ranking officers, the revelation of the Navy's struggle to integrate women into its ranks, and a stain on its reputation.

## Background & Context

### The Post Cold-War Navy

Strategic military policy during World War I, World War II, and the Cold War relied heavily on the U.S. Navy's ability to deliver personnel and equipment to bases and war zones around the world. Additionally, there had been occasional but significant threats of submarines approaching U.S. shores, and the United States invested heavily in the Navy's ability to maintain control of the seas during the Cold War, especially in the 1980s under President Reagan's leadership. When the Cold War approached an end in the late 1980s, so too did the threat to America's oceanic dominance. The Navy needed to re-define its role in United States defense strategy in order to justify maintaining, or at least slowly decreasing, its congressional budget allocation.<sup>3</sup>

The Navy's participation in the Persian Gulf War was less mission-critical in comparison with that of the U.S. Air Force and Army: Iraq did not have a navy, and there were no battles waged primarily from the sea. Further, all air combat was under the command of U.S. Air Force. When the Navy was able to fight, its performance in battle revealed a lack of preparation. For example, the Navy's Hornet planes were unable to hit their targets due to inadequate laser target devices; hence, the aviators were frustrated by what they perceived as the impossibility of their mission to hit their assigned targets. There were some victories as well, such as F-14's shooting down Iraqi planes on the first day of the war, leading Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to ground his air force. But the general feeling among Navy personnel was that it had underperformed during the Gulf War. Additionally, the Navy's ability to manage gender-integrated vessels was questioned when the ship *Acadia*, which had 350 women out of a 1,250-member crew, returned from the Persian Gulf to port in San Diego: 36 of its women had become pregnant during deployment.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Tailhook Association is a non-profit, auxiliary organization with an official mission to educate the public about the importance of sea-based aviation and foster the esprit de corps among naval aviators.

<sup>2</sup> The Tailhook Association holds an annual symposium. This event is commonly referred to as the Tailhook Convention, the Tailhook Annual Meeting or simply as Tailhook plus the year in which the specific symposium took place. Tailhook '91, for example, refers to the association's annual symposium in 1991.

<sup>3</sup> Hattenforth, John D., Ed. *U. S. Naval Strategy in 1990's*. Naval War College Press: Newport, RI, 2006. (Online - <http://www.nwc.navy.mil/press/newportpapers/documents/NP27.pdf>), p. 10.

<sup>4</sup> Vistica, Gregory. *Fall from Glory: The Men Who Sank the U.S. Navy*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995. p. 314.

In 1991, the Navy was at the beginning of a precipitous decline in numbers of active-duty personnel (from 570,262 in 1991 to 373,193 in 2000) and warships (from 526 in 1991 to 318 in 2000). With no serious threat to its marine dominance on the horizon, its mission was radically changing. Strategists for the Navy and Marine Corps began meeting in 1989 to think through new purposes for the Navy. They recognized a need to shift away from its heavy investment in anti-submarine and anti-air warfare equipment and instead to turn its attention and resources toward supporting joint force operations.<sup>5</sup> Awareness that the Navy's mission was changing but uncertainty about how is evident in this excerpt from an article that Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Frank B. Kelso wrote in the April 1991 issue of the Naval Institute's magazine, *Proceedings*:

The way ahead for the sea services is rife with change and uncertainty. We must embrace that change and continue to cover our best as best we can.<sup>6</sup>

## Integrating Women

During World War I, about 13,000 women served in the Navy, more than any other branch of the armed services.<sup>7</sup> Their roles were limited, generally either nursing or clerical. Between World Wars I and II, women were legally prohibited from serving, except for a small auxiliary force of nurses. During World War II, a significant number of women served in the Navy in a variety of occupations beyond the traditional clerical and nursing roles, including a number of specialized technical positions.

The Women's Armed Services Integration Act went into effect in 1948, allowing women to remain in the military but with an explicit prohibition against serving in combat roles and placing an overall cap on the number of women serving at roughly two percent. (The cap was lifted by Congress in 1967.)<sup>8</sup> By the late 1970s, women made up nearly seven percent of the active duty force.

The 1970s were a decade of great change for the military as a whole as the Vietnam War ended and the all-volunteer force came into being. Public awareness of discrimination against women was growing; the Equal Rights Amendment passed through Congress; and external influence from "[c]ivilian leaders in the DoD [Department of Defense] and members of Congress also brought pressure on uniformed military leaders to modify policies restricting women or be faced with more extreme change."<sup>9</sup> During this decade, the percentage of women serving in non-nurse capacities rose from 0.95 percent in 1970 to 4.7 percent in 1979.<sup>10</sup>

The debate about women in combat changed its timbre in the 1980s. "One of the most effective moves by opponents of women in the military . . . was to direct the debate away from equal opportunity to a focus on readiness and effectiveness."<sup>11</sup> Efforts to increase women's enrollment across the armed forces from 61,000 in 1981 to 87,500 by 1985 were stymied by a pause for a DoD study that led to the reclassification of 23 Army occupational specialties as combat-related and additional jobs as requiring significant physical strength.<sup>12</sup> The result of this study indicated that half of the jobs that women currently held were deemed to be combat-related or they required physical strength

---

<sup>5</sup> Ibid 17.

<sup>6</sup> "The Way Ahead" *Proceedings* U.S. Naval Institute: April 1991, p. 36. Quoted in Vistica, 19.

<sup>7</sup> Fletcher, Jean W., Joyce S. McMahon, Ailine O. Quester. "Tradition, Technology, and the Changing Roles of Women in the Navy" *Minerva*. Vol. 11, No. 3 pp. 57 my p. 3

<sup>8</sup> Ibid 3.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas, Patricia J. and Marie D. Thomas, "Integration of Women in the Military: Parallels to the Progress of Homosexuals," in *Out in Force: Sexual Orientation and the Military*. Gregory Herek, Jared B. Jobe and Ralph M. Carney, Eds. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996. p. 66f.

<sup>10</sup> Godson, Susan H. *Serving Proudly: A History of Women in the U.S. Navy*. Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2001. p. 227.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas, 67.

women didn't possess and were thus inappropriate. The report stated, however, that "[j]ust as the military led and continues to lead the nation in expanding opportunities for minorities, the military has been and remains the country's leader in achieving similar objectives for women."<sup>12</sup>

By 1991, more women than ever before were deployed for the Gulf War. During the war, seven percent of all the deployed armed forces were women. Three thousand seven hundred Navy women were deployed, about five percent of the total Navy force.<sup>13</sup> The Gulf War was significant for women in the armed services in at least two ways. First, through extensive media coverage, Americans saw the contributions women were making to the effort. "Women were taken prisoner, killed in action and were casualties of a scud missile attack. The media brought into America's living room the reality that military women were performing many of the same jobs and [were] exposed to the same dangers [as men]."<sup>14</sup> Second, the line between combat and non-combat roles was increasingly blurred. The barrier that Congress and the military erected between these roles made sense in older styles of warfare; however, the Persian Gulf War demonstrated that the line could not be so easily drawn.<sup>15</sup>

In May of 1991, the Defense Authorization Act for fiscal years 1992 and 1993 was passed in the House, removing all restrictions for women in combat.<sup>16</sup> When the bill reached the Senate, however, members proposed that there be a presidential commission created to study the issue of women in combat and removed the bill's clause that removed all combat restrictions for women. The proposal for the establishment of the commission passed overwhelmingly in July 1991. It was charged primarily with

[t]he implications, if any, for the combat readiness of the Armed Forces of permitting female service members to qualify for assignment to positions in some or all categories of combat positions and to be assigned for such positions.<sup>17 18</sup>

Though the vote to establish the presidential commission and the bill allowing women in combat were not mutually exclusive, the Senate did not follow the House's lead to repeal the prohibition against women in combat; however, statutory limitations were removed regarding women flying combat aircraft.

### Sexual Harassment in the Navy

The integration of women had been marked by significant concerns about accompanying sexual harassment.<sup>19</sup> For example, after 20 years of gender integration at the military academies, over 50 percent of women at the Army, Navy, and Air Force academies reported experiencing sexual harassment at least twice a month.<sup>20</sup> There was recognition of an ongoing problem with sexual harassment across the armed services and in the Navy in particular. In 1989, the Navy commissioned a survey to understand the significance of the problem. The Navy Equal Opportunity/Sexual Harassment Survey reported that 42 percent of enlisted women and 26 percent of female officers indicated that they were sexually harassed within the last year. In response, the Navy "restated its policy regarding

<sup>12</sup> Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (Army), *Women in the Army Policy Review* 12 Nov 1982. p. 1-1. Found online, see note above.

<sup>13</sup> Fletcher, 4.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas, 68.

<sup>15</sup> Sadler, Georgia Clark. "Women in Combat: The U.S. Military and the Impact of the Persian Gulf War." *Wives and Warriors: Women and the Military in the United States and Canada*. Laurie Weinstein and Christie C. White, Eds. Westport, CT: Bergin and Garvey, 1997. p. 80

<sup>16</sup> The final and approved Defense Authorization Act can be found online: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c102:H.R.2100.ENR>. Relevant sections are 531 – 550.

<sup>17</sup> H.R. 2100. 102<sup>nd</sup> Congress (1992). Sec. 542.

<sup>18</sup> The full text of this report can be found in book form: United States. Presidential Commission on Women in the Armed Services. *Women in Combat: Report to the President, November 15, 1992*. Washington, DC. Brassey's, 1993.

<sup>19</sup> See appendix A for definitions of sexual harassment from the DoD and related Navy policies and memos.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid* 69.

sexual harassment . . . required the delivery of Navy-wide sexual harassment prevention training . . . and sponsored another survey, the Navy Women’s Study Group.”<sup>21</sup>

This 1990 study group found that despite the fact that the zero-tolerance policy was well-known throughout the Navy, “sexual harassment still exists in all forms.”<sup>22</sup> One significant change from 1987 to 1990 was that while in 1987 the definition of sexual harassment was considered by those interviewed to be clear, by 1990 there was a “general consensus that the definition [was] ambiguous and allow[ed] far too much subjectivity of judgment to the alleged victim.”<sup>23</sup> Despite significant efforts to increase training and awareness, there was not a decline in reported sexual harassment between 1987 and 1990. In fact, when the survey was re-administered in 1991, 44 percent of enlisted women and 33 percent of enlisted officers reported experiencing sexual harassment.<sup>24</sup>

### History & Mission of the Tailhook Association

The Tailhook Association was founded in 1956 when aviators from both the Atlantic and Pacific fleets met for a reunion in Mexico. It gained nonprofit status in 1968. By 1991, the Association had about 16,000 members – a third of whom were active aviators, another third retired, and a final third civilians. To meet its budget (to fund its small paid staff and events), the Association receives dues from its members and has several corporate sponsors, including Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon, and Northrup Grumman.

The Tailhook Association describes itself as “an independent, fraternal, nonprofit organization internationally recognized as the premier supporter of the aircraft carrier and other sea-based aviation.” Its mission is “to foster, encourage, develop, study, and support the aircraft carrier, sea-based aircraft, both fixed and rotary wing, and aircrews of the United States of America; and to educate and inform the public in the appropriate role of the aircraft carrier and carrier aviation in the nation’s defense system.”<sup>25</sup>

In addition to offering year-round educational programs, publishing *The Hook* magazine, and running an educational foundation to support future aviators, the Association is known for its annual symposium, which brings together members, top Navy officers, and contractors who display the latest technological innovation and seek feedback on their products and technical service from the field. Most members attending the annual symposium are junior officers, and it is the largest annual gathering of aviators.<sup>26</sup> Two of the featured events at the gathering are a keynote address often given by a flag officer – a person of rear admiral rank or above whose role has been approved by the

<sup>21</sup> Culbertson, Amy and Paul Rosenfeld. “Assessment of Sexual Harassment in Active Duty Navy,” *Military Psychology*. Vol. 6 No. 2, pp. 69-93. p. 73. The first study group occurred in 1987. The second convened in 1990.

<sup>22</sup> United States. Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. Navy Women’s Study Group: An Update Report on the Progress of Women in the Navy. pp. III-14.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid III-13f.

<sup>24</sup> Culbertson, 73.

<sup>25</sup> The mission and purpose quotations are drawn from the Association’s website: [www.tailhook.org](http://www.tailhook.org).

<sup>26</sup> Bill McMichael, author of *Tailhook: The Mother of All Hooks*, provides this textured description of the stress a fighter pilot experiences on the job and the role of the Tailhook in played in gathering this community together:

Imagine being tightly strapped into a jet cockpit, hurtling through a squall in pitch darkness, then breaking through low clouds and angling down toward a darkened carrier deck lit with a few rows of blinking lights that don’t stop moving until after they flash past as your plane strikes the deck, bounces violently, snags of the cables and stops with a jerk.

In addition, as the jet strikes the deck, the pilot must, contrary to all natural instinct, go immediately to full power in the event the cable is missed. This allows the plane to immediately take off in case it misses, or “bolts.”

The degree of danger requires a level of sacrifice above and beyond that asked of most other members of the military. It’s a devil-may-care attitude that says in self-recognition, “I am an absolute professional. I put my life on the line for my country every single day. I’m just a little different than the average Joe.

Tailhook conventions brought this courageous, highly competent, life-on-the-edge community together. That’s what Tailhook was all about: a fraternity bash for a unique fraternity – people crazy and cocky enough to land airplanes on aircraft carriers. (p. 22)

Senate – and a flag officer panel with several high ranking officers in which the aviators have an opportunity for discussion. Flag officers are generally the highest ranking officers in attendance at Tailhook symposia. Overall the tone of the annual symposium is relaxed and informal. These are off-duty, off-base meetings.

The Association itself is not rigidly hierarchical. As an independent organization, though closely affiliated with the Navy, it operates under civilian laws. Over the years, the Navy has provided significant in-kind support for the annual convention, including free transportation for many junior officers and time off to attend the conference without documenting the time as personal leave. The Navy has expressed appreciation to the Association in its provision of time and space for professional dialogue, public education about sea-based aviation, and raising the esprit de corps of the aviators.<sup>27</sup> Overall, the naval aviation community is small relative to other naval occupations and is known for its strong group loyalty and deep interpersonal bonds, created partially by auxiliary organizations like the Tailhook Association.

The Association's annual symposium had come under scrutiny several times prior to 1991. In 1974, the Government Accountability Office criticized the Navy's use of aircraft to transport personnel to the convention. In 1975, the use of naval planes was prohibited, and attendance at the conference was significantly lower. By 1976, the Navy resumed using its aircraft for the convention.<sup>28</sup> Nine years later, after the 1985 convention, the Tailhook Association held a special board of directors' meeting to respond to the significant numbers of complaints about drunken and lewd behavior. One Association board member wrote to a squadron's commanding officer:

The encouragement of drinking contexts, the concept of having to drink 15 drinks to win a headband and other related activities produced walking zombies that were viewed by the general public and detracted from the Association/USN [U.S. Navy] integrity.

Damage to the Hilton should not be tolerated and restitution should be made by the command in charge of the suite.

Dancing girls performing lurid sexual acts on Naval aviators in public would make prime conversation for the media.<sup>29</sup>

## The 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Tailhook Symposium

### The Official Program

Cpt. Frederic G. Ludwig and the volunteer officers of the Tailhook Association and its paid staff had worked hard to create an informative and enjoyable program for Tailhook '91.<sup>30</sup> About 2,100 attendees, including aviators, contractors, and civilian personnel had registered for the professional aspects of the event.<sup>31</sup> Many of the planned talks focused on the Persian Gulf War and the role of Navy aviators in its success. The most attended official event of the weekend, however, was the flag panel with eight Navy admirals and one Marine Corps general discussing a range of topics, including the anticipated draw-down of the forces after the Gulf War. About 1,600 people attended

<sup>27</sup> This approbation is from a 1999 article in the Naval Institute's magazine, *Proceedings*, generating excitement about the then upcoming Tailhook Symposium. (Online: <http://www.greatdreams.com/tailhook.htm>) Accessed 6/4/08.

<sup>28</sup> Office of the Inspector General. The DoD. *The Tailhook Report: The Official Inquiry into the Events of Tailhook '91*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993. p.19

<sup>29</sup> Ibid 27.

<sup>30</sup> For a full agenda of the event, see appendix B.

<sup>31</sup> "Tailhook Report," 1.

the panel, many of whom were junior officers. A tense moment occurred during the panel when a question arose about the prospect of women flying combat missions. Vice Adm. Dunleavy fielded the question and responded straightforwardly that the Navy would follow direction given by Congress, at which point “[o]ne male officer in the audience stood up and forcibly stated his personal objections to women in combat. In response to the officer’s statement, the audience erupted into loud cheers and applause.”<sup>32</sup> Attendees later interviewed by DoD investigators reported that the admiral’s answer was dissatisfying to people on both sides of the debate. Those arguing for women to fly combat missions felt he missed an opportunity to defend their position, while those opposed felt Dunleavy had not advocated effectively for them.

### **The Unofficial Program**

While only 2,100 attendees registered for the formal program, over 4,000 people attended the social events. One longstanding tradition at the convention was the reservation of over 20 hospitality suites, each sponsored by a different aviation squadron. These suites served a variety of purposes, including education about the squadrons’ mission and history and recruitment of current naval officers into the reserves. However, the primary function of these suites was to provide space for gathering and socializing in the late afternoons and early evenings Thursday through Saturday. Over \$35,000 was spent on alcohol for the weekend, most of it funded privately by the squadrons and consumed in the vicinity of the hospitality suites.<sup>33</sup>

These suites were all located on the third floor of the Las Vegas Hilton. In the evenings, the hallway connecting these suites became very crowded with people drinking, talking, and occasionally rough-housing. The damage to the third floor after each Tailhook symposium had become so significant that the Hilton routinely replaced the carpet. After Tailhook ’91, the Association paid the Hilton \$23,000 for damages, most of which went toward replacing the third-floor carpet that had been severely damaged by cigarette butts and spilled alcoholic drinks.<sup>34</sup>

The Hilton worked with the Tailhook Association to provide security for the event. “Both parties [the Tailhook Association and the hotel security] approached the security function simply as an issue of containment. Neither party sought to control improper activities unless severe bodily harm or significant property damage appeared imminent.”<sup>35</sup>

### **The Gauntlet**

One of the mainstays of the third-floor tradition was the formation of “the gauntlet” on Friday and Saturday nights. The gauntlet occurred when large numbers of men, often 22- to 26-year-old junior aviation officers, crowded the hallway waiting for women to walk through. Once a woman walked through she may have been grabbed, pinched, picked up, and groped inappropriately. One aviator commented that the gauntlet “looked like a pinball machine with each guy getting his shot in.”<sup>36</sup>

Some women willingly and knowingly entered the gauntlet. However, unsuspecting women were also lured in. As one witness described, “the men would quiet down and create an opening in the crowd that unsuspecting women might think to use as a passage way . . . [Then they would be] suddenly surrounded by the gauntlet participants who

---

<sup>32</sup> “Tailhook Report,” 16.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid* 32.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid* 30.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid* 79.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid* 46.

groped them and prevented their exit.”<sup>37</sup> Some women fought back in response; others appeared too drunk to be fully cognizant of what was happening; and others seemed to enjoy it.<sup>38</sup>

One woman who fought back was Lt. Paula Coughlin, a Navy helicopter pilot and aide to Rear Adm. John B. Snyder, commander of the Naval Air Test Center in Patuxent River, Maryland. As soon as she entered the gauntlet, the participants began to chant tauntingly, “admiral’s aide, admiral’s aide.” Against her will, the men picked her up, touched her breasts, and pulled at her underwear. She later stated, “I felt as though the group was trying to rape me.”<sup>39</sup>

## Initial Reports of Sexual Misconduct

On the morning of September 8th, Lt. Coughlin lodged a complaint about her treatment to her superior, Rear Adm. Snyder. She claims to have repeated her allegation at breakfast later that morning. Coughlin says she raised the issue with Snyder again about two weeks later.<sup>40</sup>

On October 11th, over a month after the Symposium ended, Cpt. Ludwig sent a letter to those responsible for the squadron’s hospitality suites, largely commanding and executive officers. After citing successful aspects of the event, including the flag panel, he went on to express serious concerns about the after-hours activities on the third floor. He included a paragraph addressing the gauntlet specifically:

Finally, and most serious, was “the Gauntlet” on the third floor. I have five separate reports of young ladies, several of whom had nothing to do with Tailhook, who were verbally abused, had drinks thrown on them, were physically abused and were sexually molested. Most distressing was the fact an underage young lady was severely intoxicated and had her clothing removed by members of the Gauntlet.<sup>41</sup>

## The Navy’s Response

### The First Investigation

By September 29th, Coughlin was frustrated that no letter had been sent to senior naval personnel about her sexual assault at Tailhook ’91, so she sent her own letter to Rear Adm. Dunleavy, Chief of Naval Aviation. The letter was read first by Vice Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Jerry Johnson, who immediately ordered a criminal investigation by the Naval Investigative Service (NIS), to be led by Rear Adm. Duvall M. Williams, to determine who had assaulted Coughlin.<sup>42 43</sup>

On October 28th, Secretary of the Navy H. Lawrence Garrett III received a faxed copy of Cpt. Ludwig’s letter to Tailhook Association leaders from a member of the press asking for comment. The next day, disgusted by what he

---

<sup>37</sup> Ibid 40.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid 42.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid 52

<sup>40</sup> Snyder was reassigned to a less prestigious post in early November of 1992. Chief of Naval Operations Frank Kelso felt that he should have responded more deftly to Lt. Coughlin’s complaints.

<sup>41</sup> McMichael, William H. “The Mother of All Hooks: The Story of the U.S. Navy’s Tailhook Scandal.” New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1997. p. 50.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid 49.

<sup>43</sup> The mission of the Naval Investigative Service is to provide Navy prosecutors with information needed for pursuing criminal cases. (Zimmerman, Jean. *Tailspin: Women at War in the Wake of Tailhook*. New York: Doubleday, 1995, p. 68.). The NIS was dissolved in 1992 and the Naval Criminal Investigative Service took its place. The NCIS website is: <http://www.ncis.navy.mil/>.

had read and anticipating the letter's ramifications, Garrett ordered the Navy to cut all ties to the Tailhook Association. He also ordered the Naval Inspector General (IG), Rear Adm. George Davis, to investigate possible non-criminal misconduct related to the Navy's relationship with the Association.<sup>44</sup>

Undersecretary of the Navy Dan Howard convened weekly meetings with both Davis and Williams to learn about the progress of both the NIS and Naval IG investigations. Those present at the meetings included Rear Adm. John E. Gordon, the Navy Judge Advocate General; Barbara Pope, Assistant Secretary for Manpower and Reserve Affairs; and Garrett's lawyer, Cmdr. Pete Fagan. Davis offered to expand the scope of his investigation to understand the "cultural" problems facing the Navy. Howard rebuffed his offer, however, and reiterated the direction to only review any inappropriate actions stemming from the Navy's support of the Tailhook Association and its annual symposium.<sup>45</sup>

Ostensibly the purpose of the weekly meetings was to advise Howard on how to oversee a fair, thorough investigation. But as the meetings progressed, it became clear that the investigations weren't running smoothly. The NIS wasn't sharing sufficient information with the Naval IG's investigation.<sup>46</sup> And the NIS's own inquiries ran into significant resistance from the naval aviation community: most of those questioned claimed not being able to remember and/or simply denied seeing any lewd behavior. The NIS recognized that the aviation community was deliberately stonewalling its investigation.<sup>47</sup>

Williams doubted whether the investigation was worth the significant resources of time and money being spent. He expressed his pessimism to a top NIS agent that they didn't have a "fart's chance in a whirlwind" of finding those who assaulted Coughlin.<sup>48</sup> In the meantime, Barbara Pope grew increasingly frustrated with the meetings, especially with the fact that senior military leadership wasn't being held accountable for permitting the behavior to continue.

### **A New Investigation is Ordered**

On April 30, 1992, both the NIS and the Naval IG released reports that described in great detail the behavior on the third floor of the Hilton. But the reports did not produce a sufficient quantity of names of those who participated or who could be held responsible. In the end, the NIS spent between 12,000 and 13,000 hours questioning 1,500 officers stationed across the globe and was only able to name two suspects: a member of the Australian air force and a marine captain stationed at the Naval Air Station in Meridian, Mississippi.

After reading the report but prior to its public release, Pope met with Garrett and asked that the commanding officer of each squadron that hosted a suite be questioned. She also asked Garrett to write the female officers who attended the convention a letter of apology. Garrett wasn't willing to comply with Pope's requests but shared her concern about the serious cultural problems the report pointed out and leaked a memo to the press:

---

<sup>44</sup> The mission of the Naval Inspector General is to investigate all non-criminal activity – including fraud, waste, and mismanagement of funds and resources. <http://www.ig.navy.mil/>.

<sup>45</sup> McMichael, 51 ff.

<sup>46</sup> There was a significant history of the NIS and Naval IG not getting along well. For example, just prior to the Tailhook '91 investigation the Naval IG issued a report critical of an NIS investigation into the USS *Iowa* gun-turret explosion. (Zimmerman, 69)

<sup>47</sup> Passages in the *Tailhook Report* indicate that the stonewalling behavior of the aviation community continued in the DoD's investigation. The *Report* states: "Many officers refused to offer information pertinent to the investigation unless asked very specific questions...Collective 'stonewalling' significantly increased the difficulty of the investigation and adversely affected our ability to identify many of those officers who had committed assaults . . . A few officers reported the existence of a 'Lieutenants' Protective Association (LPA)' and a 'Junior Officers Protective Association' (JOPA). The LPA and JOPA were described as being an allegiance among officers. One officer told us that, according to LPA and JOPA 'rules,' a junior officer will not "give up" another junior officer just because he has done 'something stupid.'" *Tailhook Report*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>48</sup> McMichael, 53.

I am appalled by the unacceptable behavior and attitudes reported in [the NIS and Naval IG] investigation . . . [The findings] indicated a lack of responsibility, absence of moral judgment and inadequate standards of integrity on the part of the Navy and Marine Corps Officers who could have asserted positive leadership but failed to do so. It is simply not good enough to abstain from unacceptable conduct, we must demand much more from our officers; society expects no less.<sup>49</sup>

The report was publicly released on April 30, 1992, and was received poorly by the press, Congress, and the general public. None of the flag officers in attendance were mentioned in the report. It soon came to light that a 55-page section, which included an interview placing Garrett on the Hilton's third floor, had been removed from the report.<sup>50</sup> Over the next several weeks, disappointment and outrage at the quality of the investigation was expressed by the public and Congress. Barbara Boxer, who was running for the U.S. Senate in California, called for congressional hearings on the matter. Senator Sam Nunn, Chair of the Armed Services Committee, informed Defense Secretary Richard Cheney that the committee was contemplating holding back the promotions of 5,000 naval officers. Barbara Pope threatened to resign.

Garrett recognized that the credibility of the Navy, and especially its ability to conduct a meaningful investigation, had been called into question. On June 18th, he asked the DoD Inspector General to open a new investigation on all matters related to the Tailhook Association and especially its symposium.

### **Coughlin Goes Public & Secretary Garrett Resigns**

On June 24th, Lt. Coughlin granted a number of interviews to the press, including being featured for two evenings on ABC's "World News Tonight," one of the three national evening news broadcasts. Her opening words on the program were, "I love the Navy." She went on, however, to encourage women not to tolerate sexual harassment.<sup>51</sup>

On June 16th, Coughlin was invited to have tea with President and Mrs. Bush, who assured her that the DoD's new investigation would find those who had assaulted her. That same afternoon one of Cheney's top aides approached Garrett's office and within a half-hour both men emerged; Garrett had a resignation letter in hand.<sup>52</sup>

On July 7th, President Bush announced that Sean O'Keefe, one of Cheney's staff members, was nominated to serve as the Secretary of the Navy starting later that month. In the interim, Undersecretary Dan Howard served as Acting Secretary of the Navy. On the fourth day of his 12-day term, Howard gathered senior Navy officers together at the Pentagon and lectured them about the need for the Navy's culture to change:

I think it is important to underline the fact that what happened at Tailhook was not just a problem with the integration of men and women in our ranks. . . . It was just as much a problem with the toleration of stone age attitudes about warriors returning from the sea, about Navy and Marine Corps people who think the rules of civility and common decency can be suspended at will, and most of all, about alcohol as an excuse for disgraceful behavior.<sup>53</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> Vistica, 345 ff.

<sup>50</sup> Vistica, 351.

<sup>51</sup> Zimmerman, 91.

<sup>52</sup> Vistica, 354.

<sup>53</sup> Vistica, 356.

## The DoD Reports are Completed

The DoD completed its work in two phases, issuing a report at the end of each phase. On September 24th, 1992, it issued the first report criticizing the way the initial investigations were handled. Everyone who oversaw the investigation, with the exception of Barbara Pope, was named. On the same day, the early retirement of the head of the NIS, Rear Adm. Williams, and Rear Adm. John Gordon, the Navy Judge Advocate General, was announced. Rear Adm. Davis was reassigned away from his post as Naval IG.

When the DoD completed its second report in February of 1993, Bill Clinton had been sworn in as president and Rear Adm. Frank Kelso, who had served as the Chief of Naval Operations, served as the Acting Secretary of the Navy. During Clinton's first few months in office, most talk about the military in the press was in relation to Clinton's promotion of equal treatment for gays in the military. However, women in Congress had not forgotten about the Tailhook scandal and wrote a letter to Clinton on February 22, 1993, demanding that the recently completed DoD's *Tailhook Report* be released to the public.<sup>54</sup>

The final report, largely based on 2,900 interviews of attendees at Tailhook '91, was released to the public in April 1993. It found that 83 women and 7 men were sexually assaulted during the Symposium and cited 140 junior officers who would be further investigated to determine their guilt in the events on September 6 and 7, 1991.<sup>55</sup> The *Report* raised questions about the role of official leadership in the context of the Tailhook '91:

One of the most difficult issues we sought to address was accountability, from a leadership standpoint, for the events at Tailhook '91. The various types of misconduct that took place in the third-floor corridor and in the suites, if not tacitly approved, were nevertheless allowed to continue by the leadership of the naval aviation community and the Tailhook Association.

The military is a hierarchical organization, which requires and is supposed to ensure accountability at every level. As one moves up through the chain of command, the focus on accountability narrows to fewer individuals. At the highest level of this command structure, accountability becomes less dependent on actual knowledge of the specific actions of subordinates. At some point, "the buck stops here" applies. In the case of Tailhook '91, the buck stops with the senior leaders of naval aviation.<sup>56</sup>

The report also acknowledged how the wider debate over women in combat may have influenced some of the behavior throughout the convention. The report cited one female lieutenant's reflections:

The heightened emotions from the Gulf War were also enhanced with the forthcoming . . . downsizing of the military, so that you had people feeling very threatened for their job security and to more than just their jobs, their lifestyle. So you had people worried about what was coming down with the future. You had quite a bit of change. You had people that had been to the Gulf War. You had alcohol. You had a convention that had a lot of ingredients for any emotional whirlwind of controversy . . . [which resulted in] an animosity in this Tailhook that existed that was telling women that 'We don't have any respect for you now as humans . . . This was the woman that making you, you know, change your ways. This was the woman that was threatening your livelihood. This was the woman that was threatening your lifestyle. This was the woman that wanted to take your spot in the combat aircraft.'<sup>57</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Vistica, 370.

<sup>55</sup> The DoD's *Tailhook Report* uses the word "victim" to describe women who were subjected to nonconsensual indecent assault. However, the *Report* noted that "nine did not consider themselves to be a "victim" even though they have been subjected to indecent assault." p. 56.

<sup>56</sup> "Tailhook Report," 86.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid 83 f.

Between May and September of 1993, the officers cited in the DoD's report went through disciplinary proceedings. Twenty of these officers were marines who testified before Lt. Gen. Charles Krulack. Six were cleared of any guilt, and 14 were given non-judicial punishments. The remaining 120 naval officers' cases were heard by Vice Adm. Paul Reason. Half of these cases were dismissed due to lack of evidence; 43 were sent to "The Admiral's Mast,"<sup>58</sup> most of whom received a letter of caution and a dock in pay; and 23 were cited for indecent assault.

Additionally, the DoD investigators turned more than 35 files over to Defense Secretary Les Aspin; these files contained information about the participation of flag officers in Tailhook '91. Unlike the files of the 140 junior officers, Aspin did not release these files to the Acting Secretary of the Navy, Rear Adm. Kelso, partially because there was a file on Kelso himself. After civilian John Dalton was sworn in to fill the post of Secretary of the Navy in July of 1993, Aspin handed over the flag officers' files.<sup>59</sup> Quickly, Dalton issued letters to 29 of the admirals and one marine general admonishing their intolerable behavior at Tailhook '91; these letters, however, did not go into their personnel files.<sup>60</sup>

### **A Preference for a Court-Martial**

Six out of the 140 men cited were tried in courts-martial.<sup>61</sup> Two of them, Capt. Gregory Bonam, accused of assaulting Lt. Coughlin, and Lt. Cole Cowden, accused of pressing his face against the chest of a Navy nurse, had their cases dismissed.<sup>62</sup> Lt. Roland Diaz was found guilty of shaving womens' legs at Tailhook '91 and received a letter of admonition (effectively ending any chances for promotion) and a \$1,000 fine. In December 1994, in front of Cpt. William T. Vest at the Legal Service Center, the final three officers, all from squadron VAQ-139, argued that they were being held accountable for witnessing lewd behavior that Adm. Frank Kelso had also witnessed but had done nothing to stop.<sup>63</sup> These officers and their lawyer argued that Kelso had done exactly what they were being accused of and that he had been shielded from indictment because his subordinate, Vice Adm. Reason, presided over the disciplinary proceedings.

On February 8, 1994, Vest issued his judgment, finding that Kelso "manipulated the initial investigative process in a manner designed to shield his own personal involvement in Tailhook '91 . . . The failure by those responsible to take strong corrective action regarding inappropriate behavior that obviously occurred at past Tailhook symposiums is incomprehensible . . . The greatest responsibility must lie with the most senior officers, and Adm. Kelso was the most senior military officer present."<sup>64</sup>

With that ruling, the remaining 134 judicial proceedings related to Tailhook '91 were dropped.

## **Conclusion**

The U.S. Navy sent an official delegation to the Tailhook Symposium in 1999 and reinitiated its formal relationship with the organization in 2000. The Tailhook '91 crisis exposed the interdependence of the legally separate organizations of the Tailhook Association and the U.S. Navy and highlighted how their contrasting senses of accountability, organizational structure, and mission gradually led to a scandal that still looms in the public's mind

<sup>58</sup> The Admiral's Mast is an internal, non-judiciary disciplinary procedure.

<sup>59</sup> Vistica, 374f.

<sup>60</sup> Vistica, 378; Zimmerman, 270.

<sup>61</sup> Courts-martial are military courts set up to try cases regarding military law as codified under the Uniformed Code of Military Justice (UCMJ).

<sup>62</sup> They had been specifically charged with violating the UCMJ article 32 (Investigation). See appendix E for UCMJ text.

<sup>63</sup> Zimmerman, 258. These men had been charged with violating articles 92 (Failure to Obey Order or Regulation), 133 (Conduct Unbecoming an Officer) and 134 (General Article).

<sup>64</sup> Vistica, 378; Zimmerman, 272.

to this day. The membership of both organizations continues to be the common denominator, with the Tailhook Association's annual symposium, at least in the past, providing an unofficial rite of passage for rising naval aviators. However, elements of this rite of passage, such as groping women who ran through the gauntlet, were only available to men, which was incompatible with the anticipated opening of combat aviator roles to women. Behavior at Tailhook '91 may have been worsened by the fear that some had about the integration of women into naval combat aviation rank, as well as general anxiety about the Navy's shifting mission.

Just how significant was the Tailhook debacle for the recent history of the Navy? While it is impossible to point to causal mechanisms, it is notable that one week after the final DoD *Tailhook Report* was released, Defense Secretary Aspin issued an order that women be allowed to compete for combat pilot positions, and that they could serve on nearly all naval vessels. Sadly, in October 1994, Lt. Kara Hultgreen, the first woman permitted to fly F-14 Tomcats, died attempting to land her jet off the shores of San Diego on a clear day. Her death intensified the ongoing controversy in the aviation community about differing standards for men and women.

## Appendices

- A: DoD and Navy Documents re: Sexual Harassment<sup>65</sup>
- B: Tailhook '91 Agenda<sup>66</sup>
- C: Cpt. Frederic Ludwig's letter to squadron commanders<sup>67</sup>
- D: Secretary Garrett's reply to Ludwig cutting off official Navy ties with the Tailhook Association<sup>68</sup>
- E: Selected Uniform Code of Military Justice Articles<sup>69</sup>
- F: Timeline<sup>70</sup>
- G: Names and Titles of Key Participants

---

<sup>65</sup> From: U.S. House. Committee on Armed Services. *Women in the Military: The Tailhook Affair and the Problem of Sexual Harassment*. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1992.

<sup>66</sup> *Tailhook Report*, 100ff.

<sup>67</sup> Simon, Harvey. *Tailhook: The Navy Response*. Kennedy School of Government Case Program. Boston: Kennedy School of Government 1995. pp. A16 - A17.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid B22 – B23.

<sup>69</sup> From [http://www.access.gpo.gov/uscode/title10/subtitlea\\_partii\\_chapter47\\_subchapterx\\_.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/uscode/title10/subtitlea_partii_chapter47_subchapterx_.html)

<sup>70</sup> Compiled based on sources cited throughout this document.



All military and civilian personnel in the Department' of the Navy have a responsibility for maintaining high standards of honesty, integrity, impartiality, and conduct to assure proper performance of business and maintenance of public trust. Sexual harassment violates those standards, especially with regard to principles of equal opportunity.

Sexual harassment is unacceptable conduct; it undermines the integrity of the employment relationship, debilitates morale, and interferes with the work productivity of an organization. Sexual harassment will not be tolerated at any level. Substantiated acts of or conduct which results in sexual harassment shall result in corrective administrative or disciplinary action.

Sexual harassment is defined as a form of sex discrimination that involves unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- a. submission to or rejection of such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a person's job, pay, or career; or
- b. submission to or rejection of such conduct by a person is used as a basis for career or employment decisions affecting this person; or
- c. such conduct interferes with an individual's performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.

Any military member or civilian employee in a supervisory or command position who uses or condones implicit or explicit sexual behavior to control, influence, or affect the career, pay, or job of a military member or civilian employee is engaging in sexual harassment. Similarly, any military member or civilian employee who makes deliberate or repeated unwelcome verbal comments, gestures, or physical contact of a sexual nature is also engaging in sexual harassment.

Individuals who are sexually harassed by supervisors, co-workers, or peers should make it clear to the individual harassing him/her that such behavior is offensive and report the incident to the appropriate supervisory level. The appropriate official will examine the matter and take actions necessary to ensure a work environment free from sexual harassment.

#### 06 NOV 1989

All Navy and Marine corps personnel, military and civilian, shall be made aware of the prohibitions against sexual harassment. All Department of the Navy personnel shall receive initial orientation and periodic training on the prevention of sexual harassment. This training must be of such quality so as to ensure a thorough understanding of the definition of sexual harassment, sex discrimination, responsibilities of management and the employee when sexual harassment occurs and avenues of redress, available to victims.

Prevention of sexual harassment is the responsibility of all personnel. Managers and supervisors, however, are in an especially important position to prevent sexual harassment. They must take an active role in educating their employees on the seriousness of such behavior, and the employees rights in the event that they are sexually harassed.

The chain of command shall be fully utilized, and instances of sexual harassment will be resolved at the lowest possible level within the organization. It is the responsibility of every supervisor - military and civilian - to ensure that any instance of sexual harassment is dealt with swiftly, fairly, and effectively.

Military members will use the Navy Grievance Procedures, the Uniform Code of Military Justice, or Request Mast. Civilian employees will use the Equal Employment Opportunity Discrimination Complaint Process, the administrative grievance procedures, or the appropriate negotiated grievance procedures. In addition any military or civilian sexual harassment complaint may be brought to the attention of the Inspector General. Substantiated complaints shall result in corrective action, including administrative and/or disciplinary action as appropriate.

All members of the Department of the Navy must be concerned about sexual harassment and actively work to eliminate it from their workplaces.

- 0 Establish quality control mechanisms (e.g., unit climate assessments) to ensure that sexual harassment training is working for military and civilian personnel.
- 0 Make prompt, thorough investigation and resolution a priority in every sexual harassment complaint.
- 0 Establish procedures to hold every commander, supervisor, and manager accountable for providing guidance to their subordinates on what constitutes sexual harassment and how DoD personnel may seek redress if they believe they are victims.
- 0 Make sexual harassment prevention and education a special interest item for review in appropriate IG inspections/visits of DoD facilities/agencies.
- 0 Inform DoD personnel, military and civilian, that failure to comply with these guidelines will be reflected in annual performance rating and fitness reports and may lead to the loss of benefits and the imposition of penalties.

Please provide a report on your plans to implement this memorandum to the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Management and Personnel within 30 days. This report should include a record of accomplishments as well as plans for the future. Provide update reports on your progress and the effectiveness of your programs every year until further notice.

I depend on your personal involvement to make this program work.

Attachment:As stated

THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301

"WIDE  
DISTRIBUTION"

12 JUN 1991

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE  
DIRECTOR, DEFENSE RESEARCH AND ENGINEERING ASSISTANT SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE  
COMPTROLLER  
GENERAL COUNSEL  
INSPECTOR GENERAL  
DIRECTOR, OPERATIONAL TEST AND EVALUATION ASSISTANTS TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE DIRECTOR, ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT DIRECTORS OF THE DEFENSE AGENCIES  
PRESIDENT, UNIFORMED SERVICES UNIVERSITY OF THE HEALTH SCIENCES  
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF CIVILIAN HEALTH AND MEDICAL PROGRAM OF THE UNIFORMED SERVICES  
COMMANDER, ARMY AND AIR FORCE EXCHANGE SERVICE

SUBJECT: Department of Defense Strategies to Eradicate Sexual Harassment in the Military and Civilian Environment

Survey research on sexual harassment of civilian and military personnel within the Department of Defense (DoD) confirms a need to take stronger action against this form of discrimination. The cost of sexual harassment is high, in reduced mission effectiveness, in the suffering of victims, and in wasted resources. We must redouble our efforts to provide an environment free, of sexual harassment across the Department.

To that end, I direct each DoD Component to implement a program to underscore that sexual harassment will not be tolerated. At a minimum, your program must incorporate the following actions:

- 0 Continue to issue clear policy statements annually that explain sexual harassment and reaffirm that sexual harassment will not be tolerated.
- 0 Require training programs at all levels of leadership, and, for all civilian and military personnel, with special emphasis on co-workers, to teach our people how to identify and prevent sexual harassment.  
(The current definition of sexual harassment, as contained in the Secretary of Defense memorandum of July 20, 1989, is attached.)

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
Office of the Secretary  
Washington, DC 20350-1000

5 February 1992

MEMORANDUM FOR THE CHIEF OF NAVAL OPERATIONS  
COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS

Subj: ZERO TOLERANCE OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

On several occasions Department at the Navy policy on sexual harassment has been announced as one of zero tolerance. In support of this policy, as of 1 March 1992, officers and enlisted personnel of the Navy and Marine Corps shall be processed for administrative separation on the first substantiated incident of sexual harassment involving any of the following circumstances:

a. threats or attempts to influence another's career or job for sexual favors;

b.

c. physical contact of a sexual nature which, if charged as a violation of the UCMJ, could result in punitive discharge.

An incident is substantiated if there has been a court-martial conviction or the commanding officer determines that sexual harassment has occurred. All forms of sexual harassment not mentioned above should still be handled in conformance with the current Department of the Navy directive.

Please take appropriate action to implement this policy within the Navy and Marine Corps.

-----  
H. Lawrence Garrett, III  
Secretary of the Navy

## Appendix B

TAILHOOK 91 AGENDA

### THURSDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 1991

#### THE TAILHOOK ASSOCIATION

##### Executive Director

Ron Thomas

##### General Counsel

J. Wesley Fry

##### Treasurer

CAPT "Cal" Swanson, USN(Ret)

##### EDITOR

CAPT Stephen T. Millikin, USN(Ret)

##### MANAGING EDITOR

Jan C. Jacobs

##### ASSOCIATE EDITORS

CAPT Wynn F. Foster, USN(Ret)

Barrett Tillman

CW04 Carl W. Snow, USN(Ret)

##### CARRIER EDITOR

Robert J. Cressman

0900 READY ROOM AND EXHIBITS  
OPEN..... BARRON ROOM

ALL SYMPOSIUM PROGRAMS WILL BE HELD IN  
PAVILLION AREA

1600-1630 TAILHOOK ASSOCIATION MEETING

1630-1700 AVIATION SAFETY .....RADM J. B. FINNEY  
(COMNAVSAFECEN)

1700-1730 ADVANCE AIRCRAFT  
TECHNOLOGIES.....MR. T. MORGENFELD  
(LOCKHEAD NAFT TEST PILOT)

1800 EXHIBITS CLOSED  
1900-2100 NO HOST COCKTAIL PARTY/EXHIBITS  
OPEN..... BARRON ROOM

2100 REGISTRATION BOOTH CLOSED

### FRIDAY, 6 SEPTEMBER 1991

0730 GOLF AND TENNIS TOURNAMENTS  
0900 REGISTRATION AND EXHIBITS

OPEN..... BARRON ROOM  
ALL SYMPOSIUM PROGRAMS WILL BE HELD IN  
PAVILLION AREA

1030-1045 SYMPOSIUM INTRODUCTION..... VADM R. M.  
DUNLEAVY (OP-05)  
CAPT F. G. LUOWIG (TAILHOOK PRESIDENT)  
1045-1245 DESERT STORM NAVAL OPERATIONS

-MASTER COORDINATED STRIKE  
PLAN.....CAPT L. G. BIEN  
-PERSIAN GULF...CAPT J. BURIN (CVW-5)  
-RED SEA .....CAPT W. J. FALLON (CVW-8)  
-BAHRAIN/SAUDI  
ARABIA.....COL D. BEAUFIT (MAG-H)

1245-1300 HOOKER HOTDOGS

1

##### PRESIDENT

CAPT Frederic G. Ludwig, Jr.  
USN

##### VICE PRESIDENTS

##### Industrial Affairs

G. C. "Buddy" Gilman

##### Corporate Development CDR

Howard E. Ruggles, USN(Ret)

##### Reserve Affairs

LCDR William McKinnon, USNR

##### Marine Affairs

COL M. A. Rietsch, USMC

##### Educational Activity

LCDR David W. Cully, USN

##### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

##### Chairman Emeritus

CAPT F. A. W. Franke, Jr.,  
USN(Ret)

##### Chairman

CAPT W. D. "Bill" Knutson,  
USN(Ret) CAPT R. F. "Skip" Braden,  
USN

CAPT Michael J. McCabe, USN

CAPT "Cal" Swanson, USN(Ret)

CAPT Wynn F. Foster, USN(Ret)

CAPT Terry E. Magee, USN LCOL

C. L. "Chuck" Zangas, USMC(Ret)

LCDR James P. Usbeck, USN

##### Advisor, Naval Aviation Matters

RADM James D. Ramage, USN(Ret)

Information regarding Tailhook Symposiums is available from the Tailhook Association. Editorial matters only are handled at The Hook address.

Articles and news items are welcomed. Submit material for THE HOOK to:  
Editorial Offices, The Hook.

1300-1400 NAVAL AIR SYSTEMS DESERT STORM  
MUNITIONS EFFECTIVENESS BRIEFINGS

- TOMAHAWK' . . . . . LCDR B. JOHANSON  
(STRIKE U)

-AIR-GROUND  
PROGRAMS . . . . . CAPT B. RAMSAY (PMA-201)  
-AIR-AIR PROGRAMS. . . . . CDR T. MCKENZIE  
(OP-501)

1400-11515 DESERT STORM RECONNAISSANCE/  
SURVEILLANCE/INTELLIGENCE OVERVIEW

- INTEL/JOINT  
STARS. . . . . CAPT. C. JOHNSON (SPEARS)

- TARPS . . . . . LDCR D. PARSONS  
(VF-32)/LT P. MONGER (VF-2)

-RPVs. . . . . CAPT A. C. AUER (3rd RPV CO)

1515-1545 MIG KILLER DEBRIEF. . . . . LT N. MONGELLO  
(VFA-81)

1545-1630  
PRISONER OF WAR  
EXPERIENCES. . . . . CAPT C. BERRYMAN  
LT R. SLADE  
LT R. WETZEL

1630-1700  
DESERT STORM STRIKE RESCUE  
OPERATIONS. . . . . CDR M. MCCARTY (OP-503F)

1700-1730 MR. R. MASTRONARDI (SIKORSKY AIRCRAFT)

1730-1800 F-18 E/F . . . . . CAPT C. STRIDLE (PFA-265)  
AX: NAVAL STRIKE

1800-1830 FIGHTER. . . . . RADM J. TAYLOR (OP-05)  
RESERVE OFFICER  
MEETING. . . . . RADM R. K. CHAMBERS  
(COMNAVVAIRESFOR)

1800  
EXHIBITS CLOSED

1900-2100 COCKTAIL PARTY AND BUFFET (NO HOST  
AFTER 2000) . . . . . BARRON ROOM

SATURDAY, 7 SEPTEMBER 1991

0700 5K FUN RUN

0900 EXHIBITS OPEN. . . . . BARRON ROOM

0900-0930 AVIATION PERSONNEL  
ISSUES. . . . . RADM J. L. JOHNSON (BUPERS)

0930-1000 CARRIER PLANS/NAVAL AIR STATION  
PLANS. . . . . RADM R. P. HICKEY (OP-05)

1000-1030 CARRIER AIR WING  
PLANS. . . . . RADM R. D. MIXSON (OP-05B)

1030-1100 NAVAL AVIATION BUDGET  
OVERVIEW. . . . . RADM J. TAYLOR (OP-50)

1100-1200 STATE OF NAVAL AVIATION  
ADDRESS. . . . . VADM R. M. DUNLEAVY (OP-05)

1200-1400 AWARDS LUNCH-PAVILLION

1400-1405 FIGHTS ON, FIGHTS ON IV . . . . . CUBIC CORP

1405-1420 ASSOCIATION OF NAVAL  
AVIATION. . . . . VADM W. P. LAWRENCE

1420-1435 TAILHOOK ASSOCIATION BUILDING FUND  
UPDATE. . . . . CAPT W. KNUTSON

1435 FLAG PANEL. . . . . VADM R. M. DUNLEAVY (OP-05)  
VADM J. B. FETTERMAN, JR. (CNET)  
VADME. R. KOHN (CNAP)  
VADM A. A. LESS (CNAL)  
LGEN D. A. WILLS (HQMC)  
VADM W. C. BOWES (CNASC)  
RADM R. K. CHAMBERS (CNARF)  
RADM W. R. MCGOWEN (CNATRA)  
RADM J. L. JOHNSON (BUPERS)  
CAPT F. G. LUDWIG (MODERATOR)

1500-1800 EXHIBITS CLOSED'

1800 NO HOST COCKTAIL PARTY /EXHIBITS  
OPEN. . . . . BARRON ROOM

1900 BANQUET-PAVILLION . . . . . HONORABLE  
H. LAWRENCE GARRETT, III,  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

SUNDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 1991

AM BUFFET BRUNCH-PAVILLION  
1200 CHECK OUT

## Appendix C

THE TAILHOOK  
ASSOCIATION  
P.O. Box 40  
Bonita, CA 91908-0040

Phone: (619) 689-9223

I don't have to tell you that this type of behavior has put a very serious blemish on what was otherwise a very successful symposium. It has further given a black eye to the Tailhook Association and all of Naval Aviation. Our ability to conduct future Tailhooks has been put at great risk due to the rampant unprofessionalism of a few. Tailhook cannot and will not condone the blatant and total disregard of individual rights and public/private property!

I, as your president, will do damage control work at regaining our rapport with the Las Vegas Hilton and attempt to lock-in Tailhook '92. I need you to get these "goods" and "others" briefed to all those who were in attendance under your purview. Further, I need you, as the leaders of our hardcharging JOs, to make them realize that if future Tailhooks are to take place, attitudes and behavior must change. We in Naval Aviation and the Tailhook Association are bigger and better than this.

As we plan for next year's Hook, I look forward to hearing from you on any ideas you might have to help eliminate the unprofessionalism behavior during Tailhook '92. The intent is not in any way to keep from having fun. Rather, we have to figure out a way to have a great time responsibly or we will jeopardize the future of Tailhook altogether.

But Tailhook '91 was the "Mother of all Hooks," in one other way, and that brings me to the "others." The major "other" of this year's symposium comes under the title of "unprofessionalism," and I mean unprofessionalism underlined! Let me relate just a few specifics to show how far across the line of responsible behavior we went.

This year our total damage bill was to the tune of \$23,000.00. Of that figure, \$18,000 was to install new carpeting as a result of cigarette burns and drink stains. We narrowly avoided a disaster when a "pressed ham" pushed out an eighth floor window which subsequently fell on the crowd below. Finally, and definitely the most serious, was "the Gauntlet" on the third floor. I have five separate reports of young ladies, several of whom had no nothing to do with Tailhook, who were verbally abused, had drinks thrown on them, were physically abused and were sexually molested. Most distressing was the fact an underage young lady was severely intoxicated and had her clothing removed by members of the Gauntlet.

Warm Regards,  
F.G. LUDWIG, JR.  
Captain USN  
President, Tailhook Association

## Appendix D

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20350-1000

29 October 1991

Captain F. G. Ludwig, Jr.  
President  
Tailhook Association  
Post Office Box 40  
Bonita, California 91906-0040

Dear Captain Ludwig,

I am writing to you, and through you to your organization, to express my absolute outrage over the conduct reported to have taken place at the Tailhook Association symposium in September and expressed in your letter of 11 October, a copy of which was provided me yesterday.

Besides my anger, I am more than personally disappointed. The Tailhook Association has been, in the past, a source of great professionalism and esprit, an organization where productive dialogues and seminars have had a home. In particular, Tailhook '91 provided me with a superb forum to air some of the most serious issues that Naval Aviation has ever faced. But none of those attributes can make up for the personal abuses, behavioral excesses, and quite possibly criminal conduct that took place at Tailhook '91 and have now been reported to me.

There are certain categories of behavior and attitudes that I unequivocally will not tolerate. You know the phrase: "Not in my Navy, not on my watch." Tailhook '91 is a gross example of exactly what cannot be permitted by the civilian or uniformed leadership of the Navy, at any level. No man who holds a commission in this Navy will ever subject a woman to the kind of abuse in evidence at Tailhook '91 with impunity. And no organization which makes possible this behavior is in any way worthy of a naval leadership or advisory role.

Admiral Frank Kelso, our Chief of Naval Operations, and I have discussed this matter and, based upon his recommendation and with his full support, I am terminating effective immediately, all Navy support in any manner whatsoever, direct or indirect, for the Tailhook Association.

Last April I sent a message to every command in the Navy about the progress of our women officers and sailors. I said then that I would reinforce a position of zero tolerance of sexual harassment, and I meant it. That policy was not new in April, nor when I became Secretary -- but obviously it was as necessary then as it is now to reiterate just how strongly I feel about this matter. Also in April, with my strong concurrence, Admiral

Kelso made specifically clear in a parallel message that a Navy free from sexual harassment or intimidation is a leadership issue. Together we made certain that the whole Navy knew: "Each of you, from the most junior sailor to the most senior officer, has a responsibility to build working and living spaces free from unprofessional conduct, fear, and prejudice." The Tailhook Association most certainly did not live up to that responsibility.

Very truly yours,

H. Lawrence Garrett, III  
Secretary of the Navy

## Appendix E

(From [http://www.access.gpo.gov/uscode/title10/subtitlea\\_partii\\_chapter47\\_subchapterx\\_.html](http://www.access.gpo.gov/uscode/title10/subtitlea_partii_chapter47_subchapterx_.html))

TITLE 10--ARMED FORCES

Subtitle A--General Military Law

PART II--PERSONNEL

CHAPTER 47--UNIFORM CODE OF MILITARY JUSTICE

*SUBCHAPTER VI--PRE-TRIAL PROCEDURE*

### **Sec. 832. Art. 32.** Investigation

(a) No charge or specification may be referred to a general court-martial for trial until a thorough and impartial investigation of all the matters set forth therein has been made. This investigation shall include inquiry as to the truth of the matter set forth in the charges, consideration of the form of charges, and a recommendation as to the disposition which should be made of the case in the interest of justice and discipline.

(b) The accused shall be advised of the charges against him and of his right to be represented at that investigation by counsel. The accused has the right to be represented at that investigation as provided in section 838 of this title (article 38) and in regulations prescribed under that section. At that investigation full opportunity shall be given to the accused to cross-examine witnesses against him if they are available and to present anything he may desire in his own behalf, either in defense or mitigation, and the investigating officer shall examine available witnesses requested by the accused. If the charges are forwarded after the investigation, they shall be accompanied by a statement of the substance of the testimony taken on both sides and a copy thereof shall be given to the accused.

(c) If an investigation of the subject matter of an offense has been conducted before the accused is charged with the offense, and if the accused was present at the investigation and afforded the opportunities for representation, cross-examination, and presentation prescribed in subsection (b), no further investigation of that charge is necessary under this article unless it is demanded by the accused after he is informed of the charge. A demand for further investigation entitles the accused to recall witnesses for further cross-examination and to offer any new evidence in his own behalf.

(d) If evidence adduced in an investigation under this article indicates that the accused committed an uncharged offense, the investigating officer may investigate the subject matter of that offense without the accused having first been charged with the offense if the accused--

- (1) is present at the investigation;
- (2) is informed of the nature of each uncharged offense investigated; and
- (3) is afforded the opportunities for representation, cross-

examination, and presentation prescribed in subsection (b).

(e) The requirements of this article are binding on all persons administering this chapter but failure to follow them does not constitute jurisdictional error.

*SUBCHAPTER X--PUNITIVE ARTICLES*

**Sec. 892. Art. 92. Failure to obey order or regulation**

Any person subject to this chapter who--

(1) violates or fails to obey any lawful general order or regulation;

(2) having knowledge of any other lawful order issued by a member of the armed forces, which it is his duty to obey, fails to obey the order; or

(3) is derelict in the performance of his duties;

shall be punished as a court-martial may direct.

**Sec. 933. Art. 133. Conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman**

Any commissioned officer, cadet, or midshipman who is convicted of conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman shall be punished as a court-martial may direct.

**Sec. 934. Art. 134. General article**

Though not specifically mentioned in this chapter, all disorders and neglects to the prejudice of good order and discipline in the armed forces, all conduct of a nature to bring discredit upon the armed forces, and crimes and offenses not capital, of which persons subject to this chapter may be guilty, shall be taken cognizance of by a general, special, or summary court-martial, according to the nature and degree of the offense, and shall be punished at the discretion of that court.

## Appendix F: Timeline

*September 5-8, 1991* – 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Tailhook Symposium held at Las Vegas Hilton.

*October 10, 1991* – Lt. Paula Coughlin issues formal complaint in a letter to Chief of Naval Aviation Vice Adm. Richard Dunleavy.

*October 11, 1991* – Cpt. Frederic Ludwig, President of Tailhook Association, sends letter to squadron leaders warning that unprofessional behavior cannot continue at future Tailhook symposiums.

*October 11, 1991* – Vice Adm. Dunleavy orders an official investigation by the Naval Investigative Service (NIS) under the leadership of Rear Adm. Duvall M. Williams.

*October 29, 1991* – Secretary of the Navy H. Lawrence Garrett severs Navy support for the Tailhook Association.

*November 10, 1991* – Rear Adm. John W. Snyder, Lt. Coughlin's superior and the person to whom she reported being harassed, is relieved of his command.

*April 30, 1992* – The Navy Inspector General (IG) and NIS issue their respective investigative reports.

*June 18, 1992* – Navy Secretary Garrett asks DoD Inspector General to investigate the Navy's internal investigation of Tailhook '91.

*June 24, 1992* – Lt. Coughlin grants interviews to the national press about her treatment at Tailhook '91.

*June 26, 1992* – Navy Secretary Garrett resigns after being asked by President Bush. Dan Howard is appointed Acting Secretary.

*July 7, 1992* – Sean O'Keefe named Secretary of the Navy.

*September 24, 1992* – DoD Deputy Inspector General Derek Vander Schaaf issues initial report focusing on the inadequacies of the NIS and Naval IG investigations.

*September 24, 1992* – Retirement of Rear Adm. Williams, Commander of Naval Investigative Service; and Rear Adm. John Gordon, Navy's Judge Advocate General, is announced.

*September 24, 1992* – Rear Adm. George Washington Davis, Naval Inspector General, is reassigned.

*January 1993* – Rear Adm. Frank Kelso begins term as Acting Secretary of the Navy while continuing to serve as Chief of Naval Operations.

*February 1993* – Secretary of Defense Les Aspin receives final report from DoD for review.

*April 21, 1993* – President Clinton nominates John H. Dalton as new Secretary of the Navy.

*Late April 1993* – DoD releases final report on Tailhook '91 to the public.

*April 28, 1993* – Defense Secretary Aspin issues order to allow women to fly combat missions.

*May-Sept 2003* – Navy and Marine Corps investigate citations of 140 personnel named in the DoD *Tailhook Report*.

*July 22, 1993* – John Dalton is sworn in as 67th Secretary of the Navy.

*February 7, 1994* – Lt. Coughlin issues letter to Navy Secretary Dalton about her intent to resign from the Navy.

*February 8, 1994* – Norfolk military judge, Cpt. William T. Vest, drops all remaining cases related to Tailhook '91 because Chief of Naval Operations, Rear Adm. Kelso, who attended Tailhook '91 and witnessed some of the lewd behavior, exercised unlawful command influence in the prosecution of the aviators.

*May 31, 1994* – Lt. Coughlin resigns from the Navy

## **Appendix G: Names and Titles of Key Participants**

Coughlin, Lt. Paula – Navy helicopter pilot, one of 90 assault victims  
Dalton, John – 67th Secretary of the Navy  
Davis, Rear Adm. George Washington – Inspector General (IG) of the Navy  
Garrett III, H. Lawrence – 65th Secretary of the Navy  
Gordon, Rear Adm. John – Judge Advocate General  
Howard, Dan – Undersecretary of the Navy, Acting Secretary of the Navy  
Kelso, Adm. Frank B. – Chief of Naval Operations, Acting Secretary of the Navy  
Ludwig, Captain Frederic – President of the Tailhook Association  
O’Keefe, Sean – 66th Secretary of the Navy  
Pope, Barbara – Assistant Secretary for Manpower and Reserve Affairs  
Schaaf, Derek Vander – DoD Deputy Inspector General  
Snyder, Rear Adm. John B. – Lt. Coughlin’s superior in September 1991  
Vest, Captain William T. – Presiding judge in trials for junior officers  
Williams, Rear Adm. Duvall M. – Chief of Naval Investigative Service (NIS)