

Flying the bodies from Georgetown to Dover, Air Force base

Statement of Tom Barrett

- UC-123 Pilot - Vietnam
- High Altitude Reconnaissance Pilot U-2 / RB57F
- C-141 Pilot
- Wing Director of Operations USAF Academy
- Chief of Air Base Services –McChord AFB

They (USAF) initially forgot to bring an “evacuation pump” that creates a negative pressure in the [body] containers and then a plug is inserted. When we climbed out of Georgetown, the containers started “venting” gasses. The outflow valve is in the back of a C-141 and airflow moves in that direction. When the loadmaster opened the cockpit door during climb it was like someone hit him with a baseball bat. He slammed the door and grabbed an Oxygen mask and walked around with a bottle in order to check the back of the airplane. We maximized the airflow to the back of the aircraft for the remainder of the flight. When landing at Dover, the cabin was depressurized and all the airflow came forward. All the crew went on 100% Oxygen for taxi-in at Dover.

All the press was there and the USAF conducted a ceremony while off-loading the pallets. Crews had to mop up maggots on the cargo compartment floor. We were instructed to return the aircraft to McChord. I believe it took them a week to decontaminate the aircraft and get the smell out.

After landing I returned home where my wife (RN) was waiting in the driveway. She instructed me to take off all my clothes in the garage and take a long shower. The smell had permeated everything including the clothes in my travel bag. I wasn't home an hour when the base called and wanted me to do an interview with a Seattle TV station. I drove to the base (in a terrible smelling car), did the interview and returned home to find numerous media representatives camped in my driveway. It was a zoo for days including presentations at local Rotary Club and press interviews.

On Sunday my wife, two-year-old son and I were on our sailboat in Gig Harbor, WA asking, What the hell happened the last four days? It was surreal.

Since then, I have refused to join any church, and I have complete distrust of any person who has “Reverend” in front of their name.