

Pilots reach milestone during Centennial of Naval Aviation

By Penny Randall

Editor

What a better time for two pilots to celebrate a career milestone than in 2011 as the Navy celebrates the Centennial of Naval Aviation.

Lt. Cmdr. Terry "Spanky" Pankhurst and retired Lt. Cmdr. Greg "Kash" Kashouty, both recently arrived at 3,000 flight hours in the T-45 Goshawk -- Pankhurst and Kashouty are two of only three pilots who have reached this accomplishment.

"Three thousand hours kind of snuck up on me," said Pankhurst who is an instructor pilot with Training Squadron Seven. "I've loved every minute of this job -- I don't really give much thought to how long I've been at it. One day, it seemed, I just turned around and discovered time had passed and how many hours had accumulated."

As a student, Pankhurst flew the T-34C Mentor, the T-2C Buckeye and the T-45A. In the fleet he flew the S-3B Viking out of Jacksonville, Fla. He has been flying and teaching in the T-45A and T-45C since February 2000 in both Kingsville, Texas, and in Meridian. Pankhurst has been an instructor in all of the T-45 Advanced Squadrons -- VT-21, VT-22, VT-9 and VT-7.

Pankhurst offers the students he trains a piece of advice, "Never forget how lucky we are to be doing this job. When you get tired or frustrated, think back to high school or earlier when you sat and dreamed about doing just this type of thing. How many others have dreamed of it and will never know what it's like?"

Pankhurst lists his most memorable experience in the Navy as his first trap on a carrier.

"It was March 1994 in a T-2C on the USS Eisenhower -- it's something you just don't forget."

Lt Cmdr. Greg "Kash" Kashouty retired from the U.S. Navy in June 2008 from VT-22 in Kingsville. He trained student pilots at NAS Meridian from 2003-2008 for Training Squadron Seven and Training Air Wing One. He is currently a contract pilot working for M-1 Support Systems on board NAS Meridian. His job is to fly functional check flights, ferry flights and rescue flights.

Kashouty realizes that reaching 3,000 flight hours is a huge accomplishment.

"It's a lot of hard work and long hours for many years. Most of the missions are less than one hour each time that you fly, so it means there are a lot of man-ups, putting flight gear on and walking out to the plane and starting it -- lots of takeoffs and landings. I have more than 2,800 sorties to accomplish this."

Kashouty has trained hundreds of students who have successful careers in the Navy and Marine Corps.

"I have a lot of old students who are now commanders," Kashouty said. "I have students who have taught students, who have taught students... three to four generations since I started flying the T-45 in 1996."

During his career Kashouty flew nine different types of aircraft including T-34, T-2, A-4, S-3A/B, C-9/DC-9, T-45A and T-45C.

Kashouty's piece of advice for the pilots in training: "You have to want it very bad. Never stop studying, and listen to the 'Old Timers,' because most really 'have been there and done that.' You can learn a lot from other people's mistakes."

As for celebrating their 3,000th flight hour, both officers are very modest, but Pankhurst says it best: "I suppose I'll dwell on it for a few minutes and then get back to work."