

Airman Joseph E. Casey Chambley AB, France 1965 to 1966



Airman Joseph E. Casey joined the Air Force in June of 1962. After completing basic training at Lackland AFB Texas and Aircraft and Missile Electrical Systems Repair Technical School, he was assigned to RAF Alconbury England. He worked on RB66Cs and Transient aircraft there for three years. He got his 5 level AFSC and became a competent aircraft

electrician. In June of 1965, Joe received an assignment to Chambley AB France. A1c Joseph Casey was the first Aircraft Electrician assigned to the Field Maintenance Squadron Electrical Shop when Chambley was changed from a DOB to an active B-66 base in 1965. In fact, when he got there from RAF Alconbury, he had to supervise the building of the shop. All he had to go by were spaces laid out on the hangar floor with tape designating the shop space. He worked closely with the CE folks to make a functioning shop happen. From May of 1965 until he rotated in July of 1966, Joe was assigned to the 25th FMS and worked the B-66s and transient aircraft. Because of his long time experience with the Destroyers at RAF Alconbury, he was assigned to the swing shift for most of his tour.

Joe brought his British wife Vida to Chambley and they had a son Martin Spencer who was born at



Toul Rossieres AB in October of 1965. Joe and his family lived on the economy in the village of Billy-sous-les-Cotes. Life at Chambley was wonderful. Joe honed his craft and learned a tremendous amount of information about other aircraft systems. This system knowledge really helped Joe when he was assigned to SAC at Westover AFB when he left Chambley.

The Air Force flew B-52 Cs and KC135s from Westover. Joe spent four years assigned to Westover. Out of those years, he did two 6 month TDY tours in Guam. Fortunately, the TDY's were in the winter time so he escaped the Massachusetts cold two years in a row. He was a very talented electrician and was a tremendous asset to his shop. Joe and Vi's Daughter Sherylin was born at Westover in October of 1966. Martin and Sherylin are one year and one day apart.

Joe's next assignment was to Warner Robins AFB in Georgia. He was assigned to the 2955th Combat Logistic Support Squadron. The squadron didn't have a mission at Warner Robins. Its mission was to travel the country and world wide to repair battle damaged aircraft and do depot level modifications in the field. This was a really exciting time of Joe's career. By this time, he was a supervisor and a 7 level electrician. Joe led several teams out in the field and was lauded several times for his outstanding leadership. Their son Joseph was born at the Houston County hospital in Warner Robins. He was premature and had several health issues they had to deal with. Shortly after Joseph was born, Joe received orders to CCK AB Taiwan. Since this wasn't an assignment that they thought they should go as a family, they decided that Vi should take the children and go home to England to spend time with her family while Joe was overseas. Upon arrival in England, baby Joseph got seriously ill. He was hospitalized and it was determined that he had a cyst growing in

his lower spine and it was causing spinal and cerebral meningitis. The infection was very severe. While the doctors worked to get the infection under control, Vi notified the Red Cross of Joseph's condition. Joe was given emergency leave from Taiwan and joined his family in England. It took several surgeries and many weeks in the English hospital for Joseph to improve. One of the surgeries was to implant a shunt in Joseph's brain. This shunt allowed excess spinal fluid pressure to bleed off into his cranium. Joe requested, and was granted, a compassionate transfer to England. He was assigned to RAF Lakenheath where he spent the next several years maintaining first F-100s and then F4Ds. To allow him to assist in the ongoing treatment of his son, Joe was assigned as swing shift supervisor. His extensive systems knowledge stood him in good stead with the flying squadrons. He was frequently asked to report to the debriefing shack to translate flight crew squawks into maintainer's language to facilitate repairs. Joe's next assignment was to Charleston AFB South Carolina where he was assigned to the 437MAW.

Joe came to Charleston as a Technical Sergeant and he spent the first year there supervising the swing shift electricians maintaining the C-141 Starlifters. After a year, Joe was asked to transfer to the Field Training Detachment as the C-141 Electrical Systems Instructor. Joe accepted the assignment and after a short TDY to attend the Technical Instructor Course at Sheppard AFB Texas he came back to the best job in the Air Force. This was by far the most rewarding and personally enjoyable assignment of Joe's career.



He found that training was his forte and he did a really good job at it. Joe was promoted to Master Sergeant while at Charleston and took over the leadership of the Avionics Instructor team. He also was granted the 42399, Maintenance Superintendent, AFSC. After the best assignment of his career, Joe was assigned to Keflavik Naval Station in Iceland.

Joe went to Iceland as the senior Avionics Specialist working on the E3A Sentry AWACS airplane. Upon arrival, he was assigned as the third shift maintenance supervisor. The E3A was challenging to maintain as it had unique radar and communication systems. While Joe was there, the Russian Armed Forces ganged up on the Polish border. In response to this action, the E3As from Keflavik were temporarily assigned to Ramstein AB in Germany. Joe was tasked with accompanying the detachment commander in a preliminary visit to Ramstein to make the locals aware of the needed ground support and security. Once the aircraft were in place in Germany, Joe was assigned as swing shift maintenance supervisor. His role was to recover and launch the aircraft on electronic surveillance missions. Once the Russian threat was over, Joe returned to Iceland to complete his tour.

In the fall of 1981, Joe rotated stateside and was assigned to the 549th CAMS squadron at Patrick AFB in Florida. He was assigned duty as the Avionics Branch Chief. He completed his Air Force career there and in September of 1981, retired. He has since worked at the Kennedy Space Center where he is the manager of the Technical Training department for the Space Shuttle Payload Processing contractor.