

Swim Team Vacation



Kadena Air Force Base, Okinawa

The U.S. Air Force and the United States Air Force Security Service (USAFSS) have always supported members who participate in sports.

Sometimes things just fall into place.

When passing the Kadena base pool one morning in 1959, I noticed they were having tryouts for the base swimming team. The coach asked about my experience. I told him that I had been involved in competitive swimming starting in my pre-teen years. The local YMCA swimming team won the state championship and we worked out at the Yale University Payne Whitney pool. Later, it was the high school swimming team competing all over the state. Next, it was the University of Connecticut swimming team.

I tried out and made the team. My supervisor at Onna Point was not happy when I was awarded a temporary assignment to the swimming team for an indefinite period. The team practiced daily and soon We went to the Pacific Air Force (PACAF)



Kadena Olympic Pool

championships in Japan. Several of us made the PACAF team. After that it was practice, practice, plus the coach thought we needed some local culture.

The coach acquired tickets to a Sumo tournament in Tokyo, and we went as a team to the matches. Next was an Air Force “Hop” to Travis Air Force Base, California, where we were given commercial airline tickets to the East Coast. Two of the team members were from Hawaii and had been on the PACAF team for a few years and knew the ropes. They had a contact in a car rental return company, and we got to return a rental car from California to New York. We cashed in the airline tickets, and off we went to Mitchell Field in Long Island, New York, for the Air Force swimming and diving championships

We had some spending money from the car rental return and stopped along the way at motels that had swimming pools. After the swimming meet in Long Island, we took a 30-day delay (tapering off training) that the coach arranged for us.

One of the team members, Bill, who was from Del Mar, California came to my home in Connecticut for a week or ten days, then we both went to his home in Del Mar. Bill had grown up in Del Mar and spent a lot of time swimming and surfing.

We decided to go to a night beach party, had a few drinks, and then headed to his

house. As we were driving down the highway, he said, “Hey, there's a Greyhound bus behind us.” Then he said, “The bus just turned into a cop car.” Sure enough, the lights and siren came on, and we were pulled over. The officer approached the driver's window and said, “Hi, Bill, get out of the car.” Bill was well known, as his Dad owned the local taxi company. Bill told the officer he could not get out of the car because he would fall down. Problem solved: a police escort to his house.



Caption

Upon returning to Okinawa and my unit at Onna Point after a 4-month absence, the new supervisor asked who I was, what I knew how to *copy, and where I had been. It was back to my old position and targets.

Thanks for the wonderful experiences and memories.

* Dave was a manual Morse intercept operator.

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