



MARITIME PATROL AND RECONNAISSANCE FORCE HALL OF HONOR

Jay Rivers Beasley, "Mr. P-3"

United States Navy

Jay Rivers Beasley was born in Waxahachie, Texas August 9, 1914. His love for aviation began at an early age, with his first solo flight in a Curtis Pusher in 1932. He joined American Airlines as a mechanic in 1935. At the beginning of World War II, Beasley joined the Army Air Corps Ferrying Command as a civilian pilot, transporting various aircraft, including Hudson Bombers, P-38s and Vega Ventura's, from the manufacturer to military bases. He first joined Lockheed as a test pilot in March 1943. Beasley's career helped advance naval aviation by developing a vast array of safety procedures for pilots, amassing more than 20,000 flight hours along the way. He became a legend within the naval aviation community, and contributed as much to commercial aviation.

Before retiring in 1975 at age 61, he trained pilots for American, Braniff, TWA, Eastern, KLM, Pakistan, Quantas, Northwest, the Air Force and the Navy. He rejoined Lockheed as a consultant in 1978, and at the Navy's request was reinstated as a P-3 instructor pilot at 65, retiring from flying at age 70. As a Lockheed test pilot, he instructed over 5,000 naval aviators.

In his aviation career, Jay Beasley tested over 25 different military aircraft including the P-38, C-60, Hudson Bomber, PV-1, B-37, B-17, P2V-5, WV-2 and the P-3. He was twice decorated with the Navy Distinguished Service Medal from Secretaries of the Navy Chaffee in 1971 and Garrett in 1991. He was selected as Honorary Naval Aviator #11 joining the ranks of other great American heroes such as Admirals Arleigh Burke and Raymond Spruance. He has kissed the runway 31,479 times in a P-3 alone.

At the age of 81, he was still on the job when he passed away from natural causes on 15 May 1996; he was representing Lockheed Martin at a Navy P-3 NATOPS Conference on board NAS Jacksonville. Jay Beasley was a pilot's pilot in the truest sense of the word. Lockheed's president, Carl Kotchian, confessed that Jay's job was one of the very few that the company has no way of filling immediately. Jay built the job, and for the foreseeable future, there's no replacement. There's hardly a pilot in the Navy's land-based ASW flying community who has never seen Jay in action. His demonstration flights have been staged at virtually every VP base and deployment site. And his post-graduate course instruction has included over 5,000 pilots, 22 of whom have since risen to Flag rank. He is an aviation legend who will always be affectionately remembered as "Mr. P-3."