

# Bill "Buffalo" Crowell

## Former TSA Vice President Emeritus & Co-Founder of TSA

William L. Crowell II, LCDR USNR (RET) 1315 – callsign “Buffalo” “Buff” enlisted in 1974 and was selected to attend the Naval Academy Preparatory School at NETC Newport RI. He was not selected to attend the Academy and completed his obligation. He attended Massachusetts Maritime Academy on the GI Bill and graduated in 1980. He graduated with a USCG approved Third Mates License, Unlimited tonnage, Open Oceans.

In order to fulfill a dream to fly “Buff” attended AOCS in February 1981 and it was there that GYSGT Thixton, USMC gave him the callsign – “Buffalo”. He earned a commission in June 1981; a week later he married Katy L’Estrange Crowell to join him on this great journey. Together they moved to Pensacola, FL and he entered Flight Training at VT-6 at Whiting Field, Milton, FL. He flew the T-28 Trojan through primary flight training until being selected for multi-engine advanced training at VT-31 in the T-44 Pegasus at NAS Corpus Christi. Upon earning his “Wings of Gold” on June 18th 1982, he was offered VQ-Guam, VP-Moffett or VQ-3 Barbers Point. He chose TACAMO as the community was relocating from Guam to Hawaii in preparation for 100% Continuous Airborne Operations. Next was C-130 training at Little Rock AFB enroute to Hawaii, then DWEST and SERE training followed. Ensign Crowell was a member of the wardroom when it totaled 125 officers with 34 Lieutenant Commanders. VQ-3 was one the largest squadron in the Navy at that time. Buff earned his designation as an Aircraft Commander as a Lt(jg) and Mission Commander designation as a frocked Lieutenant. He served as Security Officer and Tactics Pilot. Katy and Buff had two children while stationed in Hawaii from October 1982 to April 1986. Patricia was born in 1982 and William was born in 1984.

Accepting orders to Navy Recruiting District Philadelphia the family arrived in June 1986 after having training in Orlando FL and Pensacola for the T-34B Mentor. Buff served as the Lead Pilot for the NRD, Area Instrument Pilot, and Enlisted Programs Officer for 42 recruiting stations.

In June 1989 the family transferred to VQ-4 at NAS Patuxent River, MD. He served as an AC/MC/IP and was the Mission Commander on the last EC-130Q deployment in 1992. He flew the third to last 100% CAO flight and closed down the Alert Facility at NAS Bermuda. He served as Ass’t Admin, Ass’t CommO, CommO and Aircraft DivO, before finishing active duty as the AAMO. During this tour “Buff” transferred two EC-130Q’s to NASA at Wallops Island, transferring another one to Shreveport for Mission Systems removal and two more transferred to AMARC at Davis-Monthan for storage. He was the last NATOPS qualified EC-130Q AC/MC on active duty.

In 1993 Buff transitioned to the Naval Reserve and served as the Training Officer for the CVN-69 USS Eisenhower Unit at Andrews AFB. He was promoted to Lieutenant Commander and later transitioned the IRR 1996. He retired from the Naval Reserve in 2001.

Since 1993 Buff has been an ardent supporter and mentor in the community. While working for a variety of companies as a Logistic Engineer, Training Project Manager, Training Systems Manager – Operational Training, and PM for the MR-TCDL program he has supported the following programs: Airborne Block Upgrade (ABU); High Power Transmit Set (HPTS); Airborne Command Post (ABNCP); Mutli-Function Display System (MDS); Advanced DAMA & Weight Savings (ADWS); Block I (Correction of ABNCP FOT&E deficiencies); Weapons Systems Trainer (WST) and E-6 Level “D” Equivalent Simulator (ELDES).

He was the founding father of the TACAMO reunion efforts in the PAX Area. Personally hosting events in

1995, 1997 and combining with Mike Vos in 1998. There is no place finer than Southern Maryland in the spring/early summer – The home of TACAMO

Since 2009 he worked at Northrop Grumman serving in the Advanced Concepts and Technology Demonstration Division – functioning as a site manager OCONUS in the GWOT and returning to the Communications Division when the company won the E-6B Multi-Role Tactical Common Data Link modification for the TACAMO community.

Buff departed the flight line on April 03, 2021. Buff shared his life with Katy, his wife and partner of 40 years; his children Trish and William III (Trey) of which he was very proud, and Eddie his dog. Buff was a raconteur, happiest around friends and family sharing sea stories over a beer. He was known to enjoy a practical joke, had a zest for life, and was the first to volunteer when help was needed. Buff was an active member in many organizations in his local community, including the Thomas J. Shryock Masonic Lodge #223 and the Fleet Reserve. We will miss him but carry him with us as a husband, father, Naval Aviator, adventurer, and friend. William Lawrence Crowell II, a life well lived.

After his death in April, 2021, an  
Award of Excellence in Service was established in Buff's name by  
Award of Excellence Committee in OKC  
and  
TCVA established the William "Buff" Crowell Scholarship Fund.

**TACAMO COMMUNITY VETERANS ASSOCIATION has established a Scholarship Program**

- \* The first one named for "Buff Crowell"
- \* Scholarships will be Active Duty, spouses and dependents
- \* In STEAM curriculum or other technical certifications
- \* 100% of reunion sales go to the fund

Buff Crowell Scholarship Fund  
William "Buff" Crowell II, 1956 - 2021  
<https://www.tacamo.org/scholarship>

Buff had a 20 year TACAMO career as a Naval Officer/pilot, Mission Commander, IP, & NATOPS He completed assignments in VQ-3 & VQ-4, then retired after 20 years of service. After retirement Buff continued to support TACAMO in many ways as a 20+ years as a contractor and a first to volunteer, then ask questions later. Because he held a deep admiration for TACAMO Sailors and their service, Buff assisted in the forming of the TACAMO Survivors/TACAMO Community Veterans Association 25 years ago.