



**NOAA Teacher in the Air
Todd Toth
Onboard NOAA Plane G-IV ("Gonzo")
March 9 - 15, 2006**

**Gonzo Crew
Interviews**

**Captain Mark S.
Finke NOAA**
Chief of Staff / G-IV
Pilot
U.S. Department of
Commerce

Mark has been with NOAA for 29 years. He is an instructor pilot on the G-IV, which means he is the senior pilot. Mark joined NOAA out of college looking for a job that promised a lot of travel, and traveled he has – having been to all 50 states and all U.S. territories. His first tour with NOAA was aboard a ship traveling from California to Alaska. An opening in aviation presented itself so Mark joined the aviation branch in 1979. He has worked as project manager for the past three years.



Michele Finn
Commander, Gonzo G-IV aircraft

Michele has been with NOAA for 17 1/2 years. She graduated from Texas A&M with a degree in biology. She joined NOAA right out of college and was trained by NOAA to become a pilot. As mentioned earlier, she is now the plane commander.

John Longenecker
Pilot, Gonzo G-IV aircraft

John and I could reminisce a little about Pennsylvania since he attended high school in Annville, Pennsylvania at Annville-Cleona High School. He started in the Navy and then applied to the NOAA Corps. John holds degrees in science and engineering and has been with NOAA for 14 years. He mentioned that the NOAA corps is pretty small with only 299 total members.

Will Odell
Pilot, Gonzo G-IV aircraft

Will heard about the NOAA corps as a graduate student and decided to apply. He has been with NOAA for 12 years. Will did a short stint on a NOAA ship but then quickly made the transition to the flight division; The Navy trained him to fly helicopters and then fixed-wing aircraft. Will and I talked at length about students getting into the NOAA Corps and how much he has enjoyed it. He suggested the following link to anyone who is interested in the NOAA Corps: <http://www.noaacorps.noaa.gov/>

Marty Mayeaux

Meteorologist, G-IV aircraft

Marty received a degree in meteorology from Northeast Louisiana University (The University of Louisiana at Monroe). Upon graduation he worked for the National Weather Service for 5 years. Marty has been with NOAA for 8 years. Aboard Gonzo, Marty's workstation is the central data station connecting all other workstations. He describes what the atmospheric conditions are going to be at the dropsonde locations, times between drops, data on each drop and if it was successful. A data file is then saved and transmitted back to NOAA.

Dave Brogan

Technician, G-IV aircraft

Dave started working for the National Interagency Fire Center setting up portable weather stations to detect forest fires. He then applied to NOAA and has been working with them for 4 years. Dave described the GPS Dropsonde System, also known as AVAPS (Airborne Vertical Atmospheric Profiling System) to me. Dave, Bill and Mark all do routine maintenance on equipment, prepare the dropsondes, and deploy the dropsondes.

Bill Onley

Electronics Technician, G-IV aircraft

Bill came to NOAA from the Navy. He has been on Gonzo for two years now. As mentioned earlier, his job is to prepare the dropsondes for launch, check the data as the dropsonde falls and perform routine maintenance aboard the plane.

Mark Rogers

Electronics Technician, G-IV aircraft

Mark also came to NOAA from the Navy. He has been with NOAA for 10 years. Mark is responsible for all the electronics aboard Gonzo. He, Bill and Dave also take care of the dropsonde deployment.

Gonzo

Last, but not least is Gonzo, itself. Gonzo is a Gulfstream G-IV SP, high-altitude aircraft based at MacDill Air force base in Tampa, Florida.