



0. OUT OF BLOOD AND GAS - Story Preface

1. HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

2. RACIAL PREJUDICE IN THE NAVY

3. AN IMPOSSIBLE DREAM

4. DEEP SEA DIVING LEGENDS

5. MYSTERIES OF THE DEEP

6. MIXED-GAS DIVING

7. MID-AIR COLLISION

8. U.S. NAVY SALVAGE

9. OUT OF BLOOD AND GAS

10. BREAKING THE RULES

11. AMPUTEE DIVER

12. MASTER DIVER

13. REMINISCENCES OF CARL BRASHEAR

In 1966, following a terrible accident aboard the USS *Hoist*, Carl Brashear was treated at the U.S. Air Force Hospital at Torrejon Air Base near Madrid, Spain. This image depicts how that hospital appeared, circa 1960. Photo by Joe Hicks; copyright, Joe Hicks, all rights reserved. Image provided here as fair use for educational purposes.

When the crew on board the *Hoist* realized how badly Carl was injured, they sent the bomb back to the bottom of the sea. Treating Carl became their top priority.

Since there was no doctor on board ship, and Carl was bleeding profusely, he had to be airlifted off the *Hoist*. The plan was to take him by helicopter to Torrejon Air Base, in Spain, after a corpsman (whose name Carl no longer remembers) applied a life-saving tourniquet.

In the confusion following Carl's injury, the helicopter was not refueled. As Carl was running out of blood, the helicopter was running out of fuel. It was forced to land some distance from Torrejon's hospital.

By the time Carl finally received proper medical attention, it was about 9 p.m. He had been bleeding for hours. The doctor at Torrejon thought Carl had died. Before sending what he believed was a dead body to the morgue, the examining physician checked for a heartbeat one last time. There was a faint one.

Instead of going to the pathology table, Carl went to the operating table where he received about 18 pints of blood. (The average human body contains about 12 pints.)

In the meantime, with the use of a Cable-Controlled Underwater Recovery Vehicle (CURV), the Navy was able to retrieve the missing bomb. It was brought aboard the USS *Petrel* on April 7, 1966, its parachute still attached.

The crew immediately saw the bomb had been damaged. Fortunately, no lives had been lost as a result of any of the bombs - including the damaged "Robert" (also known as bomb #4).

Carl Brashear's life had also been spared, but his leg would not be. Following two months of fighting infection and gangrene, Carl told his doctors he could not spend three years in the hospital while his left leg (which would be considerably shorter than his right leg) healed.

He made a decision to have the doctors amputate. He thought it was the only way to save his Navy career.

After four guillotine-type surgeries, where more of his leg was cut off each time, Carl was left with a below-the-knee stump. He received his first prosthetic leg in November.

His plan was to go back to work. The Navy's plan was to retire him from active duty. The discharge process had already begun.

Disregarding hospital rules, Carl Brashear needed a little help from some friends to pull off his plan.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/OUT-OF-BLOOD-AND-GAS-Men-of-Honor-Story-of-Carl-Brashear)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/OUT-OF-BLOOD-AND-GAS-Men-of-Honor-Story-of-Carl-Brashear>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/OUT-OF-BLOOD-AND-GAS-Men-of-Honor-Story-of-Carl-Brashear>

Questions 2 Ponder

How Can We Summon the Courage to Face Horrific Pain?

Carl Brashear needed four separate operations in the process of losing his left leg. During each surgery, doctors removed a bit more of his limb.

What would it have been like to go through four separate surgeries, in the amputation process, instead of having all the work done in a single operation?

What would it be like to comprehend that during each of the four surgeries, the purpose of the surgery was not to save the leg but to remove it?

How do we summon the courage to face such horrific pain and anguish?

Media Stream



USS Hoist

Image online, courtesy [Nav Source](#).

PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/USS-Hoist0>

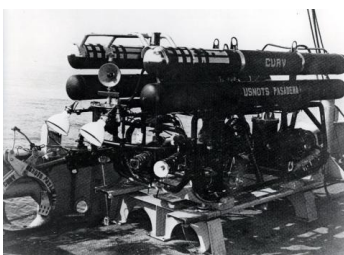


USS Hoist - At Sea

Image online, courtesy [Nav Source](#).

PD

View this asset at: <http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/USS-Hoist-At-Sea>



CURV - Cable Controlled Underwater Recovery Vehicle

Image online, courtesy U.S. Navy.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/CURV-Cable-Controlled-Underwater-Recovery-Vehicle>



Recovered Bomb - 1966 Nuclear Weapons Incident

Image online, courtesy U.S. Navy.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Recovered-Bomb-1966-Nuclear-Weapons-Incident>



Recovered Bomb on the U.S.S. Petrel

Photo by U.S. Navy. Image online, courtesy U.S. Navy.

PD

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Recovered-Bomb-on-the-U.S.S.-Petrel>



OUT OF BLOOD AND GAS

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/OUT-OF-BLOOD-AND-GAS-Illustration->