

HISTORY of CRUD, SECOND EDITION

American CRUD Players Association

SOME HISTORY as of Jun 2004

Guaranteed: These days, on any given Friday evening (and often other nights of the week too) after work, you can go to any US Air Force base where there are fighter and fighter support aircraft (F-15 "Eagle," F-16 "Falcon," OA/A-10 "Thunderbolt II," F-117 "Stealth," E-3A/B "AWACS") and you will find assorted male and female professionals who happen to be CRUD players. You can go to most transport aircraft, or "Airlifter" bases (C-141 "Starlifter," C-5 "Galaxy," C/AC-130) and find them also. At most Air Force Base (AFB) across the Atlantic and the Pacific you will find it. And finally, many Marine and Navy fighter pilots are great CRUD players too.

I first played CRUD in the summer of 1980 while en route to a new assignment in the A-10 "Warthog," and I've enjoyed the game ever since. I've played it mostly with Air Force, but also Army, Navy, Marine, and Canadian and British fighter pilots and other professionals, and their ladies. CRUD has spread to many other non-fighter bases throughout the Air Force. Tinker AFB, Laughlin, Randolph, Wright-Patterson, Travis, and McChord, to name a few. They are playing it, and as predicted in the first edition, it's growing, because it's just a really great game.

(1991) Nowadays there are frequent tournaments held at Nellis AFB, Las Vegas, Nevada, usually during their RED FLAG training exercise, and at Cold Lake Airbase in Canada in their RED FLAG variant, MAPLE FLAG. In fact, when Nellis, "The Home of the (Air Force) Fighter Pilot" opened its newest Officers Club in 1990, included in the design was a sunken amphitheater-type room officially named the CRUD ROOM. Davis-Monthan AFB in Tucson AZ tries to have a CRUD tournament once a quarter. At Osan AFB in South Korea, there has been an annual New Years Eve CRUD Tournament since December 1984. It was banned by the wing commander after the 87-88 New Years shindig because the winners, the Juvats from Kunsan AB, couldn't stand the old officer's club table any more. It was in such dilapidated condition from many, many years of use, that it literally had to be taped together and leveled by strange objects for the tournament that night. By this time, these fighter pilots were used to better CRUD playing equipment, so they took matter into their own hands, literally, and threw the old table over a nearby ledge, causing terminal destruction. CRUD playing merely went underground until a new Wing Commander resurrected it. Besides the young fighter pilots, the "older" colonels and some general officer fighter pilots also play, but these good gentlemen are more often Judges for the tournaments.

Since privately publishing the American CRUD Players Association Official Rules of CRUD, First Edition in 1988, I have still not been able to track down just exactly when and where CRUD originated. The most recent reliable history was provided by recently retired (May '91) Canadian fighter pilot, Major Gord Welsby of Alberta, Canada. His name was given to me in May of 1992 when I went back to Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Cold Lake, Alberta to tape a tournament and conduct some more research.

Gord told me he played the game as far back as 1959, maybe even 1958. He said he first played something like present day CRUD at CFB Moose Jaw, a pilot training base in southern Saskatchewan, and went on to relate how the game started out as a 1 versus 1 sport and how the players had to "shoot" the cue (Shooter) ball standing an arm's length away from the table. However, this distance gradually got shorter, and finally ended up at the table, but they were only allowed to shoot from the ends. That fix alone determined one of the great unique things about CRUD; one must first quickly retrieve the cue ball from someplace around the table, then determine which end of the table is most advantageous for their shot, get to that end, and make an aimed or "mach" shot. He didn't think the game started in the Officer's Mess, but rather might have started in the Enlisted Mess (he started as an enlisted member). Somewhere along the Officers adopted it as the "pilot's game."

The circumstance that caused the game to be started, according to Welsby, seems fairly logical considering the isolated location of some of the Canadian air bases and a general lack of funds provided officer's and enlisted clubs then, and still even now. Bored with the long winter evenings, but in possession of a great

snooker table with no capability to "cue up," various games were invented. Apparently there were variations of curling, hockey, and soccer tried. Gord also thought that the name "crud" (the ACPA capitalized it on purpose) came from the Canadian's penchant for the word 'cruddy' in those days. In other words, the great north weather was "cruddy," everybody came down with "artic crud," and all the equipment was billiard/snooker equipment was "cruddy."

This making up of games in this "wilderness" of hockey-loving, beer drinking, fighter pilots probably led to the gradual acceptance for rough play. But in some places it got so rough that pilots were banned from playing.

The banning of pilots from playing CRUD matches a rendition of some history told to me by retired Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Jerry "Possum" Harris. He was in Perth, Australia with NASA's Mercury and Gemini programs between 1958 and 62. He couldn't pin down exactly when, but remembered it was called "Slosh" and that aircrews weren't allowed to play because it was too rough. The name "Slosh" was also used by a young Australian airline pilot when he saw me and some others playing at the McChord AFB Officers Open Mess one evening in January 1990. This leads me to believe that the sport is alive and well somewhere in Australia, and I shall find it.

Brigadier General (USAF, Ret) Keith "Shine" Connelly, Fighter Pilot, told of first playing this game in September 1962 at CFB Cold Lake, Alberta. But he said he recalled it being called "Advanced Pool" ("Arctic Pool???"), and that around 1965 he heard it referred to as "Twoball" for awhile. Colonel (USAF, Ret) John Davis, Fighter Pilot, told me he played CRUD in April 1965 in Toronto while attending a military staff college course. He commented that, "...it seemed like an old game then." Col. Tom "Tango" Wilson recalled playing CRUD at Otis Air Force Base in 1959 sometime. He said it was brought there by some TDY Canadian pilots. These accounts lend credence to the most accepted theory that the game started in Canada, but whether at CFB Cold Lake or Moose Jaw may be difficult to determine. Cold Lake is certainly the most famous place for it now.

The rules of CRUD have generally been sort of "just understood" by an inner circle of fighter pilots and their friends, with an occasional effort made to post some vague and shallow (read "arguable") form of them by the local CRUD table. Nevertheless, the studious newcomer to the game always sees some definite rules emerge, though some may vary slightly from air base to air base. (See Chapter on "Variations"). It should be noted here that a very few, ultra hard-core fighter pilots full of their version of the "Right Stuff" think the rules should never be written down and that fighter pilots should be the only ones ever allowed to play. Anything else, to them, detracts from the uniqueness of the game.

Most players have, or are quickly given, their own tactical call sign, such as "Hoss," "Lucky," "Boozer," "Killer," "Walleye," "Lobosayo," "Zorba," "Bunny," and "Injun." The wives and girlfriends have been known to play very well and have formed their own teams at various bases (most famous is Seymore-Johnson AFB in N. Carolina), and because CRUD requires more skill than luck and brawn, I've seen some of these wives teams win against guys with class, and excellent form.

Two stories of some humor: In November of 91, I was at a reception talking with an Army wife who's husband had just pinned on his second star. Maggie Sigfried told me about the first night she played CRUD. It was at England AFB, Alexandria, Louisiana in the Officer's Club on a Thursday night. She and some other officers wives were invited to a cocktail dress affair at the club, and when the dinner was over, some of the younger ladies began retreating to the CRUD table. Maggie followed and soon began to play. They were all having so much fun, save for almost ripping her dress, that she and the other ladies dismissed the male club staff, and all the ladies took off their dresses and played in their slips, etceteras, for an hour or more.

Beverly Pitts, whom I've known since about 1980, told me how, in 1985, she introduced CRUD to the patient inmates of the psychiatric ward of the prison near Alexandria, Louisiana where she once worked. It was a great success, and she had recently talked to one of her co-worker friends who told her that they just held a CRUD tournament (July 1991). The patients seem to get great satisfaction from being a part of a team with the assurance that everyone plays. Beverly added that the way she, as Judge, kept control of any

disrespectfulness or displeasure with her calls was to jokingly (?) threaten the use of the dreaded straight jacket.

Most recently, in 1998 and 1999, Air Combat Command, with the assistance and sponsorship of Canadian Club, Inc., conducted a nationwide ACC Crud Tournament at Davis-Monthan AFB, Tucson, AZ. In 1999, the 2nd annual ACC Crud Tournament was held at Nellis AFB, Las Vegas Nevada. I was one of the tournament finals Judges in each event. Moody's team won the 1998 ACC Championship and Tinker's team won in 1999.

In 2000, the Tournament was again held at Nellis AFB and ACC Services had another two tables built on the style of Langley AFB's tables. Thus, we had a great 3-table tournament that year. We also brought in some new judges, Bill "Boss Hogg" Pitts and Kenny "Bull" C+9. Our hats are off to our commercial sponsors - so, buy lots of Canadian Club and Makers Mark. Oh, wonder of wonders, the winning team this year came from my home Crud base, Langley AFB. I've been training them well.

This 58 year old Crudmeister was at Langley AFB one Friday in January 2001, and since no one was playing, I elected to practice a bit. Up walks this gutsy Lt..Col. TDY Guard guy, Chip Lamb, and wants to know if I would like to play a game. Sensing a chance to hustle a little, I agreed. 20 games later, we finally called it quits -- probably more for my longevity than any lack of wanting to continue -- with me ahead 12 to 8. Anyway, I then gave him a calling card and he recognized the name "Blister" from many years back. Chip had heard my name years ago, wrote me, and wondered whether he'd ever hear back from this Crud guy. Of course, I sent him the usual package and now, many years later, he had gotten to play a few rounds with "that guy." Made my day too, Chip.

At any rate, rather than pool, billiards or snookers, CRUD is favored by Air Force personnel when they gather wherever there is a pool table. The popularity of this fast-moving, fun-filled sport has been growing consistently from Alaska to Korea and Honduras to Saudi Arabia. ACPA has just published an updated set of rules (suitable for wall mounting), 2000 ACPA Official Rules of CRUD. This is first update since publishing the ACPA Official Rules of CRUD pamphlet in 1988. This compilation of rules and my continued participation represent my genuine love for the sport, and the great hope that more people will begin to play it someday. Olympics 2010 or 2014, eh?

Recent great news, Miller Lite Brewers have become a sponsor of CRUD for the tournament in Las Vegas Oct 17-19, 2001.

The ACC CRUD Tourney at Nellis AFB for 2001 was canceled because of the 9/11 tragedy. The next one is scheduled for September 2002.

A recent couple of e-mail between the Pentagon and Scott AFB, AMC Hq, provide a neat part of the history and covers the popularity of CRUD in the higher military echelons.

----- Original Message -----

From: "Simmons Jimmie L Col HQ AMC/DOV"

Sent: August 22, 2002 3:59 PM

Subject: RE: Bill Townsley Contact Info

Blister,

I have the (dubious) honor of being flight lead for AMC's first-ever Crud tourney ... we're going to do it at this year's Airlift/Tanker Association (A/TA) convention in Nashville (7-10 Nov). As I am but the humble Chief of Stan/Eval I am not in the decision loop but I'm told I'll have 2 over-size pool tables in a public area and a couple four hour blocks in the schedule to conduct the games ... since crud is a spectator sport.

Our aim: At the end of the 3-day conference, through a fair contest of mind, body, soul, and skill the best

crud team in AMC. As this is my first sortie of this nature (think you steered me to the rules for crud in a previous E-mail) I'm seeking your sage counsel, advice, wisdom, or any other guidance you would graciously lend so that I meet a covey of 4-stars expectations ...

Therefore, request any planning material and/or considerations you can send my way. Send me a note with a good date/time and I'll make voice contact.

Meantime, thanks and Vr,
Jimmie Simmons
Col, USAF
AMC/DOV

I responded with a note to contact a Marvin Cox in the Pentagon.....and this followed

“Sent: Thursday, August 22, 2002 4:25 PM
From: Cox, Marvin (Dean), CTR, AF/XOPS
To: Simmons Jimmie L Col HQ AMC/DOV
Cc: LD Johnston; Julia Black; Bill Townsley

Col Simmons,

Actually, both the Nellis and Patrick CRUD tournaments were part of the annual series of Warfighter Talks between the senior leadership of the Air Force and the senior leadership of the other services. The Nellis Talks were the 2000 Army-Air Force Warfighter Talks and the Patrick Talks were the 2001 Navy-Air Force Warfighter Talks.

I am a contractor (retired AF Lt Col) hired to assist AF/XOXS, the Skunk Works, plan and execute the Warfighter Talks. I have done seven of the events, so far, with the next one scheduled this December between the Army and the Air Force.

I proposed CRUD as an "Icebreaker" event in the planning stages for the 2000 Army-Air Force Warfighter Talks--the first time it was played in a Warfighter Talks. The Air Force XO and his Army counterpart agreed to try it. After the tournament, Gen Ryan, then CSAF, directed that a CRUD tournament be a part of every Air Force hosted Warfighter Talks. Gen Tommy Franks personally called back to his staff the next morning and told them the AF had introduced a new game to him called CRUD, and called it "a hoot". Gen Shinseki called the 2000 Army-Air Force Warfighter Talks "the best conference he had ever been to." CRUD has been played at every Service-Air Force Warfighter since the 2000 Army Talks at Nellis.

In the planning stages for the recently completed 2002 Marine-Air Force Warfighter Talks, the Marine Major General Co-Chair insisted that the "Second Annual Marine-Air Force CRUD Tournament" be a part of the event—he really liked it in the first Marine-Air Force Warfighter the year before. Both Navy and Marines have included the tournament in Warfighter Talks that they recently hosted.

We have always mixed teams with the service chiefs acting as head of a team, but our goal was to build camaraderie and personal relationships, not to determine a winner.

Nellis AFB Officers' Club has hosted ACC CRUD tournaments and could probably provide you with some host base type of specific planning information you require for an AMC tournament. There is also a Maj Greg Payne, dsn 223-7930, who happens to be the AF blue-suiter working Warfighters in XOXS and who participated in an ACC CRUD tournament and can give you advice from the players perspective. He is willing to talk with you about his experiences.

Hope this helps.
Dean Cox

The latest ACC Services sponsored tournament took place at Nellis AFB Sept 4-7, 2002. This event was partially sponsored by Miller Lite Beer, but their support is waning. Thirteen teams participated in this tournament. This included the returning Langley Champions from 2000. Again, there was no 2001 tournament because of 9-11. Final outcome was the new Langley team came in first, the returning Champs came in second.

Feb 28, 2003- There was a Ladies tournament at Langley AFB. There were 7 teams entered. It was a great turnout and lots of screaming and hollering by all. Daine "Lady Di" Donnelly of the "USA" team won great respect for her efforts. Her team was down to 1 Life (her's) to 10 Lives for the other team. She won, and the roof did get raised for awhile. Nevertheless, the wives of the 27 Fighter Squadron won overall.

Little Rock AFB – September 2003. Torch Warrior project officer put on a 3 table Crud Tournament involving 16 teams from around Airlift Command. In spite of Hurricane Isabel, I drove down and a good friend, Chip Lamb, flew in to ref. The finals involved the team from Little Rock AFB and Holloman AFB, with Holloman winning after a controversial ending, which was my fault for a bad call. I can always only hope the "Replay" satisfied the angry masses.

Well, what do you know - they asked me back for their Nov 2004 event at Vandenburg AFB.

Nov 2004 - Went to Vandenburg and was head judge at there big CRUD tournament.

Blister

William E. Townsley, Colonel, USAF (Ret.)
President and Commissioner, ACPA