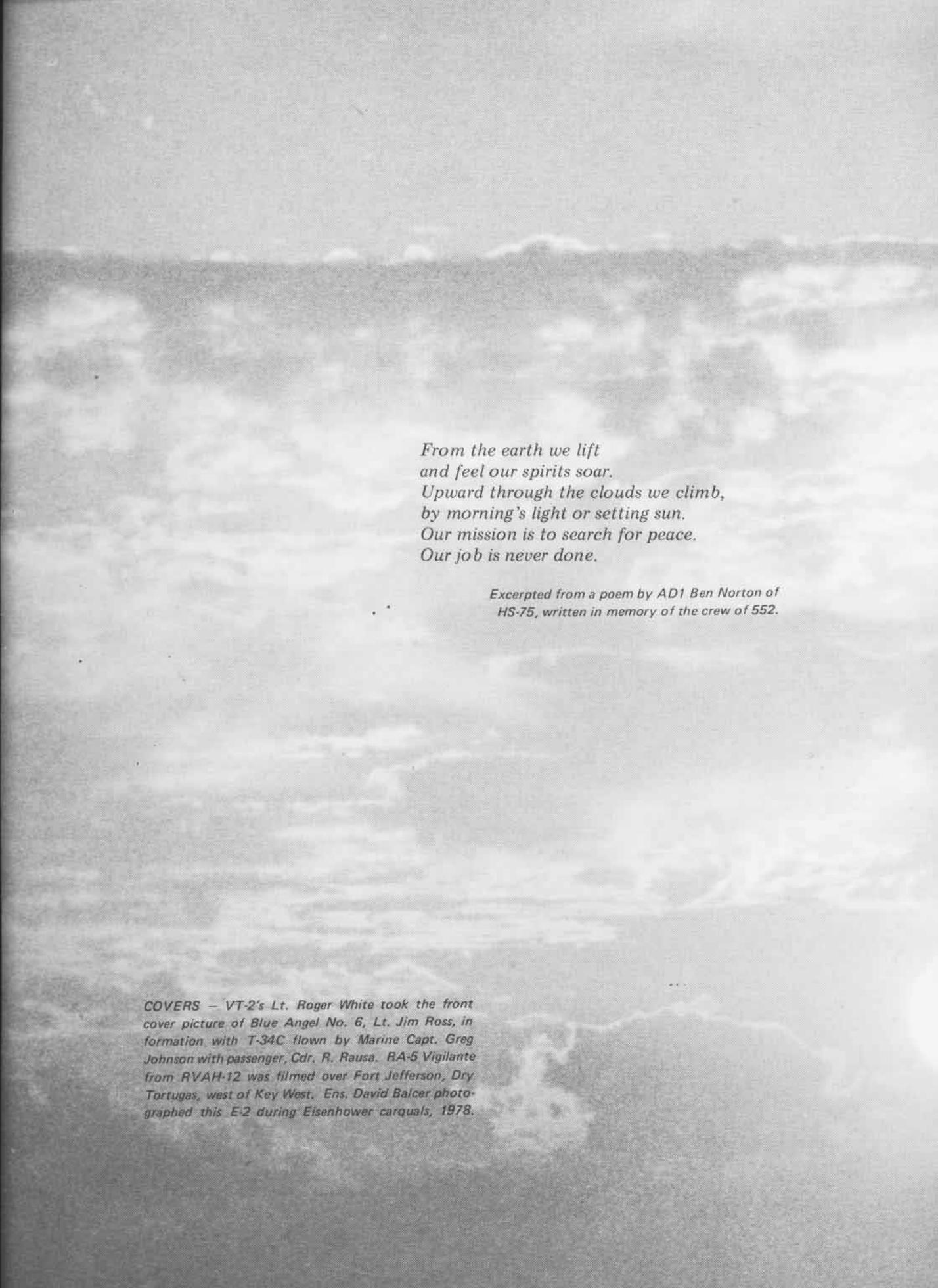


# NAVAL AVIATION NEWS



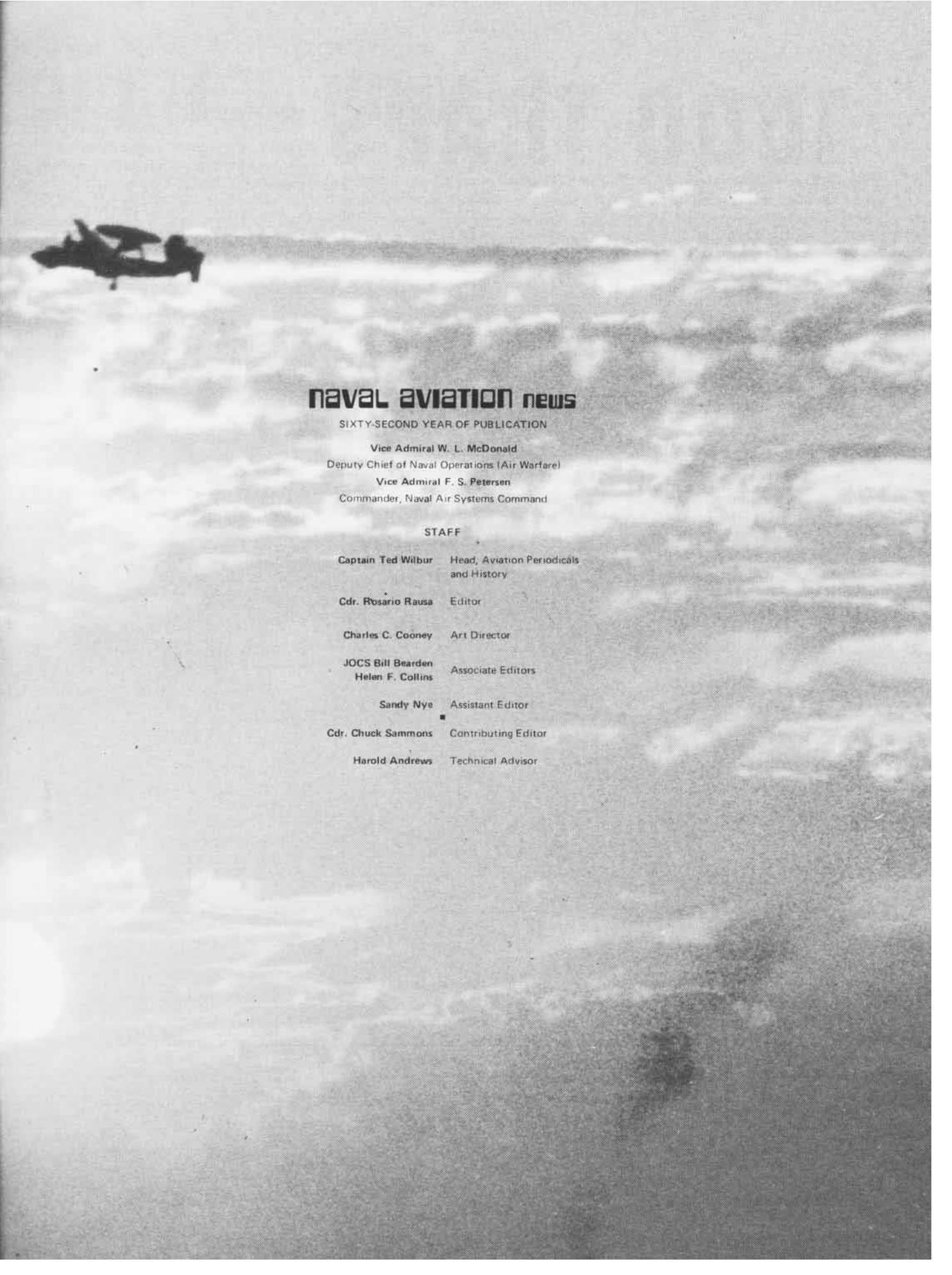
DECEMBER 1979



*From the earth we lift  
and feel our spirits soar.  
Upward through the clouds we climb,  
by morning's light or setting sun.  
Our mission is to search for peace.  
Our job is never done.*

*Excerpted from a poem by AD1 Ben Norton of  
HS-75, written in memory of the crew of 552.*

*COVERS — VT-2's Lt. Roger White took the front cover picture of Blue Angel No. 6, Lt. Jim Ross, in formation with T-34C flown by Marine Capt. Greg Johnson with passenger, Cdr. R. Rausa. RA-5 Vigilante from RVAH-12 was filmed over Fort Jefferson, Dry Tortugas, west of Key West. Ens. David Balcer photographed this E-2 during Eisenhower carquals, 1978.*



## naval aviation news

SIXTY-SECOND YEAR OF PUBLICATION

Vice Admiral W. L. McDonald  
Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Air Warfare)

Vice Admiral F. S. Petersen  
Commander, Naval Air Systems Command

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# 1000 TRAPS

The following is a list of those flyers who have made 1,000 or more carrier arrested landings. Ranks may have changed. If we have missed listing you or you know someone qualified for membership on this exclusive roster, please let us know.

Capt. H. D. Alexander  
Capt. Robert Arnold  
Cdr. Ronald N. Artim  
Capt. Stan Arthur  
Cdr. Fred Baldwin  
Capt. John S. Brickner  
Capt. Edward F. Bronson  
Cdr. Emory W. Brown, Jr.  
Capt. Norman Campbell  
Capt. Guy Cane  
Capt. W. Lewis Chatham  
Capt. Douglas L. Clarke  
RAdm. Bryan W. Compton, Jr.  
Cdr. Lewis W. Dunton III

Cdr. R. W. Hamon  
Cdr. Robert W. Hepworth  
Cdr. Marshall A. Howard  
Capt. Richard L. Kiehl  
Capt. H. P. Kober, Jr.  
Cdr. James A. Lair  
Capt. Bobby Lee  
Capt. P. H. "Bud" Lineberger  
Capt. R. E. Loux  
Capt. Roger A. Massey  
Cdr. James T. Matheny  
Cdr. Hugh "Tony" Merrill

Cdr. David W. Rucker  
Capt. James M. Seely  
RAdm. William G. Sizemore  
Cdr. L. W. "Snuffy" Smith  
Capt. William F. Sparr  
Cdr. Gary L. Starbird  
Cdr. T. R. Swartz  
Capt. Jeremy "Bear" Taylor  
Capt. Robert Taylor  
Capt. Bert D. Terry  
Capt. Dwight D. Timm  
Capt. Charles L. Tinker  
RAdm. Ernest Eugene Tiss  
Cdr. R. E. "Gene" Tucker



Capt. Bud Edney  
Cdr. L. L. Elmore  
Capt. John L. Finley  
Capt. James H. Flatley III  
Cdr. Roger P. Flower  
Capt. S. C. Flynn, Jr.  
Cdr. George Gedney  
Cdr. Jay H. Hall

Capt. Thomas G. Moore  
Capt. Mel Munsinger  
Capt. "Moose" Myers  
Capt. A. J. Nemoff  
Cdr. J. P. Park  
Cdr. Richard K. Pottratz  
Capt. W. V. Roeser

RAdm. Jerry O. Tuttle  
Cdr. John M. Waples  
Capt. George Watkins  
Capt. D. R. Weichman  
Cdr. William W. West  
Capt. W. R. Westerman  
Capt. Gary F. Wheatley  
Capt. John R. Wilson, Jr.

# DID YOU KNOW?

## Tailhook 1979

Once again, the Tailhook "ready room" in the Las Vegas Hilton was filled with Tailhookers, over 1,000 of them, celebrating their 23rd annual reunion. This year's September reunion was highlighted by the attendance of young officers from squadrons throughout the Navy. Their voices were loud and clear at the symposium and especially during the panel discussion.

Symposium programs included aviation personnel issues; F/A-18 flight test report; S-3 weapon system; NASA space shuttle orbiter flight test report; Alpha Jet; Cubic's Air Combat Maneuvering Range (ACMR) system; YAV-8B flight report; tomorrow's Navy and the panel discussion. VAdm. W. L. McDonald DCNO(Air Warfare), was moderator of the panel and members included VAdm. R. B. Baldwin, ChNavPers; VAdm. R. P. Coogan, ComNavAirPac; VAdm. G.E.R. Kinnear, ComNavAirLant; VAdm. F. S. Petersen, ComNavAirSysCom; and Lt. Gen. W. J. White, Deputy Chief of Staff for Aviation, HQMC.

VAdm. G. E. Miller, USN(Ret.), Senior Vice President of the Association of



Naval Aviation, and Mr. E. R. Jayne, Associate Director for National Security and Internal Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, debated the subject of tomorrow's Navy. VAdm. Miller argued for a strong nuclear carrier task force while Mr. Jayne advocated smaller carriers and land-based naval air power.

Naval Aviation's outstanding squadrons for 1978 received awards and trophies: VF-84, Clifton award (sponsored by Litton); VA-56, McClusky (Vought); VS-38, Thach (Lockheed); VAW-115, AEW Excellence (Grumman); VA-205, Davison (McDonnell Douglas); and VT-6, Goldthwaite (Rockwell).

Max Trap Awards went to pilots and NFOs attending the reunion with the most traps in their respective grades: RAdm. J. J. Barth (934, pilot); Capt. Paul Stephenson (827, pilot); Capt. W. H. Reed (320, NFO); Cdr. R. P. Flower (1,052, pilot); Cdr. K. W. Vanlue (375, NFO); LCdr. M. J. Sullivan (650, pilot); LCdr. C. C. Buchanan (763, NFO); Lt. John Leenhouts (401, pilot); Lt. Ollie Wright (508, NFO); Ltjg. Jim Weatherbee (239, pilot); Ltjg. Don Watkins (204, NFO); and Ens. Butch Bernier (39, NFO). Grand Club Awards went to Cdr. Flower and Capt. A. J. Nemoff for bagging over 1,000 traps.

Special awards were presented to VAdm. W. I. Martin, USN(Ret.) who captured the 1978 Night Hooker of the Year title for his record of 440 career night traps; and to Mr. Ed Heinemann who was recognized for his lifetime contributions to the design of aircraft built for the Navy by Douglas Aircraft Company.

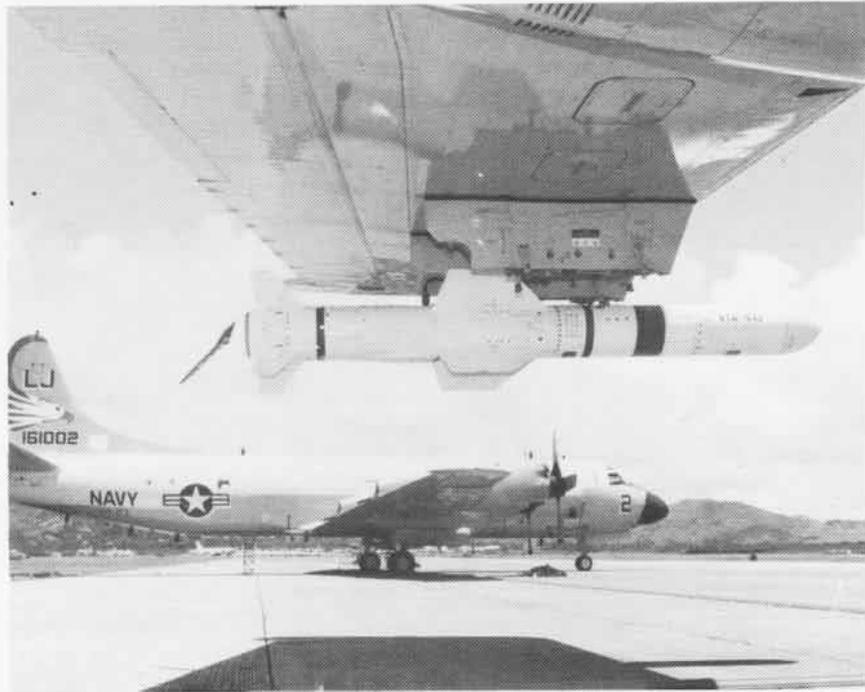
R. G. Smith, configuration engineer and artist for McDonnell Douglas

# DID YOU KNOW?

Corporation, was presented a special award in recognition of his many contributions to Naval Aviation over the years.

The keynote speech was delivered by Adm. Donald C. Davis, CinCPacFlt, and the Tailhooker of the Year award went to VAdm. F. C. Turner, recently retired as DCNO(Air Warfare), for his contribution to carrier aviation not only during the year but also throughout his naval career. In picture, left to right, are VAdm. Baldwin; VAdm. Coogan; Ken Richardson, an executive of Hughes Radar Systems Group; VAdm. Kinneary; VAdm. Petersen; Lt. Gen. White; and Harold Altis, Vice President, McDonnell Douglas. (By Bob Lawson)

**Harpoon** Brunswick-based VP-23 is the first fleet squadron to operationally deploy with the McDonnell Douglas *Harpoon* missile. During Atlantic Fleet exercises last summer, a *Harpoon* was launched from a VP-23 P-3C Update II, using its



expanded computer capabilities and varied detection systems. Following launch, the missile descended to cruise altitude and hit a decommissioned destroyer target.

The *Harpoon*, an all-weather, antiship weapon system, is now operational on many ships and submarines.

**Guayule Rubber** Guayule retreads were subjected to the stresses of catapult takeoffs and arrested landings in October at NATC Patuxent River, Md. The tests are part of Navy's search for a domestic source of natural rubber for aircraft tires suitable for carrier takeoffs and landings.

Guayule is a rubber-producing shrub which grows in semi-arid areas of California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and Mexico. In 1910 it accounted for

about 10 percent of the world's rubber supply, but dropped behind when synthetic rubber was introduced. The increasing need for natural rubber and spiraling costs of petroleum-dependent synthetic rubber have rekindled interest in guayule.

Naval Air Rework Facility North Island, is pioneering the use of guayule rubber in rebuilding Navy aircraft tires. Five VA-122 *Corsairs* were fitted with one guayule tire each, earlier this year, for wear tests.

### Hornet on the Ball

The Navy/Marine Corps F/A-18 *Hornet* recorded its first carrier arrested landing on October 30, 1979, aboard *America* off the Virginia Capes with LCdr. Dick Richards at the controls. Actual touchdown was at 1529 and signaled the beginning of a successful period of carrier operations. Richards and Lt. Ken Grubbs, both from the Carrier Suitability Branch of the Strike Aircraft Test



Hornet on America with Lt. Grubbs at controls.

Directorate at NATC Patuxent River, Md., alternated flying the aircraft. They made numerous catapult launches and landings in the next several days.

"The aircraft performed well on the ball and throughout the launch, approach and landing sequence," said Richards. "Visibility from the cockpit was excellent in flight and on the deck. Power and control responses were great. We are very pleased with the progress."

The *Hornet* is scheduled to become operational in the fleet and with the Marine Corps in the early 1980s.



# GRAMPAW PETTIBONE

## Low-Level Lunacy

Shortly after lunch, two West Coast F-14 *Tomcat* crews briefed for their afternoon low-level navigation/air intercept control mission. A minimum altitude of 500 feet AGL was emphasized since both crews had limited low-level experience. At the completion of their navigation route, they conducted low-level intercepts in the northern half of the restricted area. The bogey was briefed to maintain heading throughout all runs even if the crew saw the "opposing" fighter. The fighter was to acquire visual and radar contact, then maneuver to the bogey's stern quarter to observe low altitude radar capabilities and aircraft turn performance.

The flight launched and proceeded as a section to the first low-level checkpoint. From there they estab-

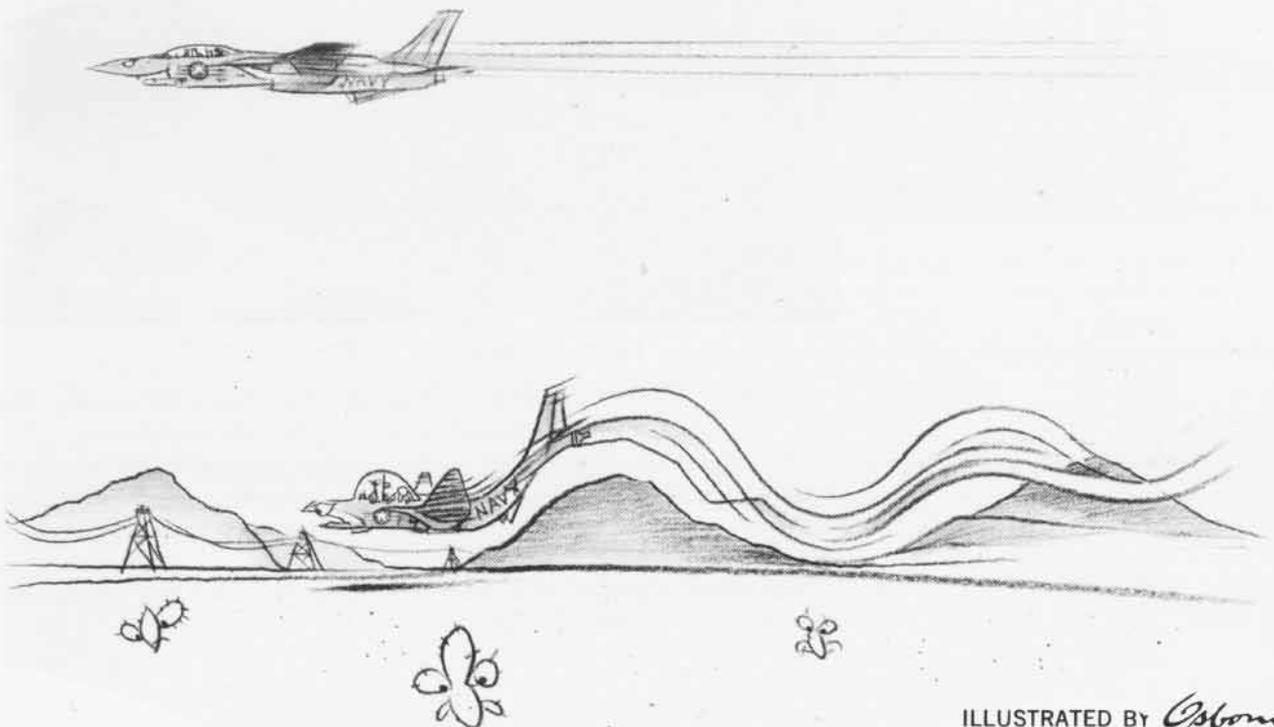


lished interval and proceeded independently around the route in order to obtain maximum training for both

crews. Both aircraft terminated uneventfully in the restricted area and took position as briefed for intercept missions.

Four low altitude (500-foot) intercepts were completed, with the aircraft alternating bogey and fighter roles. At the start of the fifth run the #2 aircraft, acting as bogey, informed his RIO that he would descend a little lower on the run. Terrain height in the area (desert) varied between sea level and 500 feet MSL. The pilot reset his radar altimeter warning from 350 feet to 50 feet above ground level, but did not inform his RIO that he was doing so.

He proceeded inbound from the west at 350 knots and 150 feet altitude, directing his scan forward for terrain clearance and to starboard for visual acquisition of the fighter. Less than a minute into the run, the bogey



pilot sighted the fighter at his two o'clock position, proceeding east-bound at approximately 1,000 feet altitude. About five seconds later, the bogey pilot and RIO felt a severe thump.

The pilot began an immediate climb, leveled at 8,000 feet and decelerated to 250 knots. During the climb, his RIO saw a large hole in the starboard slat. Additionally, he noted that the outer portion of the starboard horizontal stabilizer was bent up at a 90-degree angle. The other *Tomcat* was informed of the problem, rendezvoused and observed the damage.

The beleaguered F-14 was tested in the landing configuration at speeds as low as 115 knots. The flight then proceeded to the closest suitable field, where an uneventful 165-knot straight-in, no-flaps landing was made on the 9,500-foot runway.

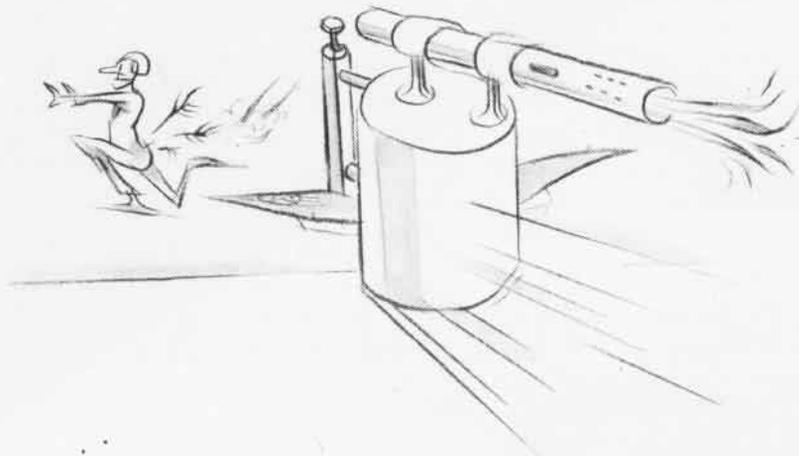


Grampaw Pettibone says:

Holy low-level lunacy! This accident was the result of extremely bad judgment, airmanship and violation of Nap-tops. The loud thump was caused when the aircraft's right wing struck an oblique metal brace on top of a 45-foot-power-line pole. Damage involved the starboard LAU/7 launcher, leading edge wing slat and the horizontal stabilizer. Pure dumb luck prevented this crew from becoming permanently ingrained in the sands of this low-level route. Professionalism on the part of the pilot and RIO (senior member of the crew) was needed on this escapade. Nuff said!

## Flame Out to Flame Up

While in the 10,000-foot holding circle, awaiting entry into the FCLP pattern, the pilot of an RF-8G *Crusader* experienced a sudden loss of engine power. All engine gauges were normal except the exhaust gas temperature which progressively dropped to 330 degrees. Attempts to restore power were unsuccessful so the pilot began a flameout, spiral approach to the NALF.



Grampaw Pettibone says:

Great balls of fire! This is one way to warm up a chilly November afternoon. The cause of this young man's misfortune was a misplaced lock washer lodged between the fuel control body and the elbow to the flow meter. The washer prevented the elbow from seating properly and eventually caused the rubber seal to work free, allowing a sizeable fuel leak to develop. Upon landing, the hot sparks from the grinding wheel assembly ignited the fuel pouring from the port aft fuselage section.

The pilot's alert action and skill in getting his "toasted tailpipe" on deck were instrumental in minimizing damage to his ill-fated bird. However, his decision to attempt an arrested landing with a flaming fuel leak leaves old Gramps "pretty cold." It could have "cooked his goose" had he "trapped" and forced the flaming fuel forward, engulfing the cockpit. Fortunately, the hook point failed, thus removing that problem. So, Gramps yields benefit of doubt to Lady Luck. Reason for the tire blowing upon landing is unknown.

All factors considered, this young gent came out of this "hot seat" with only scorched tail feathers rather than singed whiskers!

Power loss continued throughout the approach and, at touchdown, the engine stopped. The port main tire blew and wheel rotation stopped, grinding away approximately four inches of wheel diameter. The wingman, circling overhead, informed the pilot that he had a fire in the aft section of the aircraft. The pilot in trouble then secured the engine fuel master switch and dropped his hook for an arrested landing.

The hook-shank retaining point separated from the aircraft as the *Crusader* continued down the runway. The pilot commenced aerodynamic braking and noted the aircraft veering to the left due to drag from the blown tire and locked wheel. The aircraft slowed and came to a stop 5,200 feet down the runway, just after departing the left edge of the surface. The pilot opened the canopy, unstrapped and jumped out of the flaming aircraft. Crash crews arrived within two minutes and promptly extinguished the fire which was located primarily along the port fuselage from the wing flap to the tail.

# TRAINING

*Fly Fly Fly*

By Commander Rosario Rausa



USE HAND SIGNALS  
FOR PRIORITY ONE



AIR FRAMES

POWER PLANTS

RADIOS

ELECTRICAL

THROUGH THESE PORTALS PASS THE  
WORLD'S FINEST NAVAL AVIATORS  
AND STUDENT NAVAL AVIATORS

THIN

# AIR WING FIVE

## *and Fly some more*

First the numbers: Twelve percent of all takeoffs and landings in the Navy, worldwide, are made by the instructors and student pilots of Training Air Wing Five based at Whiting Field, Fla. Its five squadrons, three fixed and two rotary-wing, fly 180,000 hours annually, operate more than 300 airplanes, average over 1,000 flight hours a day (based on an equivalent 178-day flying year) and handle an average annual on-board count of 900 students from the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and foreign military

services. The wing is the largest of six within the diversified Chief of Naval Air Training complex which has units based in Texas and Mississippi as well as Florida. Commodore Kenneth A.

Dickerson heads the organization which, in addition to his own administrative staff, consists of VTs 2, 3 and 6, fixed wing units that provide primary and intermediate flight instruction, and HTs 8 and 18, helicopter squadrons, which teach fundamental and advanced helicopter flying, respectively. The Commodore also has NAS Whiting Field's support forces helping to accomplish the mission. Captain Robert W. McKay is the air station C.O.

Wing instructors average 500 or more hours a year. Hard-chargers can accumulate as many as 900 hours in the cockpit annually. The flight surgeon is consulted when one of these enthusiasts hits the 100-hour point within a month, before being cleared



to continue. If a pilot reaches 265 flight hours in a quarter, the wing commander himself approves further flying. Clearly, Training Wing Five aviators get all the flying they want and then some.

Captain William J. Somerville, who was Commodore of the wing until his retirement from the Navy last August, was most pleased with his organization and its people. He cited their dedication, enthusiasm and the pervasive, upbeat mood at Whiting. "Our people belong to the flyingest outfit in the Navy. They work their butts off and are very proud of what they do." Because of instructor shortages, new pilot production had been reduced somewhat in recent years throughout the training command. However, squadrons are close to being fully manned now, aided considerably by reserve officers who returned to active duty and augmented the instructor force. Pilot production is now climbing satisfactorily. While the Naval Aviator retention problem (*NA/News*, October 1979) remains a major one, the incoming flow of students who want wings of gold has not diminished and Training Wing Five is one of the major groups tasked with teaching them how to fly the Navy way.



SAFETY

NAS Whiting is named after one of Naval Air's most honored flyers, Captain Kenneth Whiting (*NANews*, August 1978), who helped pioneer carrier aviation. Situated in Milton, Fla., the base actually consists of two separate airfields called north and south field. Fixed wing operations are accommodated at the former, rotary wing at the latter.

Epitomizing the can-do, will-do spirit at Whiting is VT-6. Squadron personnel, led by their skipper, Cdr. Jim Edgar, liberally disseminate small, bright-colored decals which convey a simple message: TRAINING SQUADRON SIX – WORLD'S GREATEST TRAINING SQUADRON. Despite VT-2 Marine Capt. Greg Johnson's friendly rejoinder to said claim (see letters page 40), VT-6 has credentials to back up the praise it has received. In fact, last September Rear Admiral Joseph J. Barth, Chief of Naval Air Training, presented VT-6 the coveted Goldthwaite Award, symbolic of excellence and accomplishment. Sponsored by the Columbus Aircraft Division of North American Rockwell, the award is named for another superb Naval Aviator, VAdm. Robert Goldthwaite. He made significant contributions to the training command as a flight instructor, squadron C.O. and, ultimately, Chief of Naval Air Training.

"VT-6, on a monthly basis, has completed more students in less time, with fewer instructors, than any other squadron in the training command," observed RAdm. Barth, pointing out that in 1978 the unit flew more than 40,000 accident-free hours.

"It is one thing to go around putting stickers on bulkheads and in various places saying 'World's Greatest Training Squadron,'" he said, "but it is an extremely different thing to make it be true and, in this case, it's true."

Cdr. Edgar's outfit flies both the T-28 *Trojan* and the relatively new, turboprop-powered T-34C *Mentor*. The T-28s, incidentally, will eventually fade from the scene and be replaced by T-34s. However, some are on their fifth life cycle extensions and are serving actively at this time. The

*Trojans* are viewed as a diminishing breed but there are no problems getting instructors or students to train in them. There is a nostalgic aura surrounding the piston-powered two-seater and many a flyer wants to immerse himself in it.

"The average instructor flies twice a day, sometimes six days a week," said Edgar, "and our hops last about an hour and a half each." Job satisfaction, one of the principal complaints cited by aviators in recent surveys conducted in response to the serious pilot retention issue, is not an overwhelming problem at VT-6, or in any of the other units either. Maybe it's because everybody is too busy flying.

"We want the instructors in VT-6 to remember this tour as the best two or three years in their lives," declared the skipper.

At one end of the single-story brick building which houses the three fixed wing squadrons of the wing is VT-2. It is headed by Cdr. Ron Folse who sports a mustache and, on occasion, dons an enormous Mexican hat and bandoleers in convincing emulation of Emiliano Zapata. He is very high on the *Mentor*.

"It's a great training machine," he said. "The radios work especially well and enhance communications which are so essential in instructing students. And the air conditioning system makes the hot and humid summer days much, much easier to take." He added, "We adhere closely to the busy daily schedule. We may fly 180 sorties and log 300 hours in a single period of day and night flying. We enjoy better than 70 percent aircraft availability which certainly helps matters."

The T-34Cs are maintained under contract with Beech Aerospace Service Inc. Bell Helicopter supplies parts directly to HT-8 for its TH-57s which are otherwise maintained by Navy personnel. The *Hueys* of HT-18 and *Trojans* are maintained by the Navy as well. As measured by the high aircraft availability rates, both the civilian contractors and their Navy counterparts are doing a superb job.

For Whiting's instructors, the fly-

ing is certainly different from that which they experienced in the fleet. But it is no less important. "Once here," explained Cdr. Folse, "people like the duty. We all have administrative responsibilities but, for the most part, instructors go home when they're not in the air or scheduled to fly."

On the student side of things, half of the fledgling's working day is spent in the air, the other at ground school. They are guided by the Navy integrated flight training system (NIFTS). It takes some juggling but the syllabus is designed so that flying phases match ground school subjects as closely as possible. It is not good for the student to get too far ahead in one phase or the other, so energetic coordination between flight and classroom schedules is characteristic of the wing's activities.

"Through films and other briefings," added Folse, "we also try to expose the student to as many areas of Naval Aviation and fleet operations as we can. We want them to get a real concept of the flying Navy at large."

VT-3 is the third element in the T-34C triumvirate at Whiting. Cdr. Bob Duchesne is the C.O. and his unit also enjoys an excellent aircraft availability rate which allows the wing to amass such an abundant amount of flight hours.

At the heart of the fixed wing training program is the *Mentor* itself. The major difference from its predecessor, the T-34B, is the PT6A-25 engine which gives the plane plenty of power and increased maneuverability. It can take off in 1,200 feet and land in a little more than half that distance. It can climb to 25,000 feet at 120 knots in 25 minutes although most student flights are conducted below 10,000 feet. The T-34C cruises easily at 180 knots and is equipped with a full spectrum of navigational aids and transponder gear. The turboprop emits a jet-engine sound which is exceptionally noticeable to the flyers of yesteryear who flew the T-34B with its six-cylinder opposed-piston engine. The new *Mentor* features a reverse thrust capability for ground operations. Called Beta range it permits shorter landing roll-outs. Importantly, the aircraft can be flown through a full

T-28s are still flown at VT-6.



range of aerobatics.

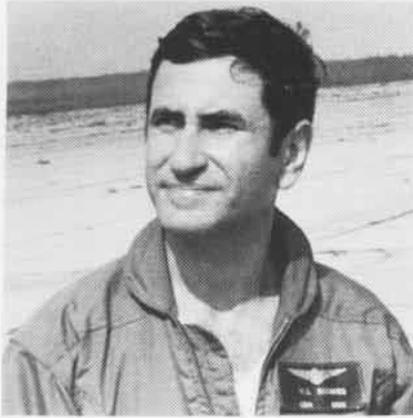
The primary syllabus at VTs 2, 3 and 6 includes day and night familiarization, basic and radio instruments, precision aerobatics and formation flying. Included in the intermediate syllabus are radio instruments, day and night navigations and airways navigation.

After completing primary and intermediate training in the T-34 or T-28, students in the helicopter pipeline remain at Whiting and move on to HT-8 where they will fly the TH-57 *Jet Ranger*. Those destined for the strike and maritime pipelines are transferred to other wings at Naval Air Stations Pensacola, Fla.; Corpus Christi, Kingsville and Chase Field, Texas; or Meridian, Miss.

At HT-8, the curriculum includes day and night familiarization hops, operational navigation and helicopter tactics. The students will learn how to



HT-8 student hustles toward Jet Ranger at Spencer Field.



HT-8 X.O., Cdr. Vincent Secades

hover, one of a helicopter pilot's most critical responsibilities, and to fly autorotations. Each fledgling will make more than 100 autorotations while at HT-8. Fifty percent of the student load, incidentally, consists of U.S. Marine Corps officers. And, as in all Training Wing Five squadrons, there is a solid balance of Navy as well as Marine Corps aviators serving as instructors.

Cdr. Jack Gander is HT-8's skipper. A helicopter pilot with extensive anti-submarine warfare experience in his logbook, he praised his instructors. "They are outstanding," he said. "They fly two or three hops a day and sometimes get 30 or more flight hours a week. Some retention problems exist but, overall, morale is good here.

"The quality of students is up," he went on, "and only about one percent of them are lost through attrition after coming to us. (The attrition rate in HT-18 is about four percent.) They have come a long way before arriving at HT-8 and their basic aviation skills have already been proven."

The squadron enjoys a high aircraft availability rate. The unit won the CNO Safety Award in 1978 in the face of a heavy student load and the pressures of achieving the pilot production goals.

Although restricted to VFR operations due to its limited instrumentation, the TH-57 is ideally suited for its role in teaching the rudiments of rotary wing flight.

In the five to five-and-a-half week period required to complete HT-8's course, students will gain the all-important hovering experience and

make what seems to them like a never-ending sequence of autorotations. This maneuver calls for the student to descend at idle power from 500 feet simulating power plant failure. Without bringing the engine back on the line he flies the aircraft to a full stop landing before taking off again. One of the area's most familiar scenes is Spencer Field which proliferates with *Jet Rangers* autorotating into and climbing out from the busy field. Also, some students actually stand by at a building in the center of the field while a partner in the pursuit of wings does his thing with an instructor. The students will then swap seats, a time-saving endeavor.

Like other training command C.O.s, Gander feels strongly that he should fly often with students to keep in intimate contact with operations. He and his executive officer, Cdr. V. C. Secades, alternate on the schedule so that one is on deck when the other is in the air.

Cdr. Secades stressed the importance of practicing autorotations and made an interesting if not wearying point. "An instructor may make 30 to 40 of them a day."

Skipper Gander cited one of the benefits of being an instructor. "I believe you can get an awful lot from this type duty," he said. "You can see the results of your work. It is evident in the way the student progresses. ASW missions don't always produce the same sort of satisfaction that teaching a young flyer how to handle a helicopter does. Some of our instructors, by the way, follow their students' progress on through HT-18, and when the time comes, pin their wings on."

The X.O. extolled the chance for building up flight time. "For example," he said, "pilots and aircrews in an HC or HSL squadron may get 15 hours flight time when based ashore and 35 to 40 hours per month on deployments. Here, 50 and 60-hour months are common."

That point sets well with the aviator anxious to build up his logbook. Clearly, instructor duty at Training Air Wing Five is a flourishing endeavor.

TH-57 Jet Ranger from HT-8 practices autorotation.





Helicopter Training Squadron Eighteen flies H-1 *Hueys* and, commanded by Cdr. Gary Kochert, provides advanced instruction for future helicopter pilots. Students undergo night and day familiarization flights, basic and radio instrument training, airways navigation, formation flying, carrier qualifications, and helicopter tactics. As crucial as any other stage is the radio instrument phase. HT-18 graduates will soon enough be taking off from and landing on pitching decks at sea or fields ashore in all types of weather.

Lt. Larry Hayner, a combat-experienced instructor who flew CH-46s in Vietnam, manned his *Huey* one hot day last August for an instrument flight. With him were flight students, 1st Lt. Bill Mercker, USMC, and Ltjg. Paul J. Cappellino. Bill would fly in the right seat for the first hop while Cappellino rode as observer in the passenger section aft. Later they would swap positions. For Bill, the flight was a prelude to an all-important instrument check ride. He had to satisfactorily complete it

before moving on in the program.

The engine was fired up and the helicopter trembled momentarily as the rotor blades were engaged. They cast a slowly rotating shadow on the concrete before gathering speed and becoming a blurred circle. The plane captain secured the access door on the port side and the flyers double-checked that they were properly cinched down in their seats for the morning's work in the sky.

There followed a sharp exchange of commands and responses over the intercom as the checklist was completed. Hayner then manipulated the engine controls and collective, and announced, "Coming up." The *Huey* rose a few feet and Hayner keyed his mike again, "Sliding left." Responding to signals from the plane captain forward of the nose, Hayner flew the machine to the left, brought it to a gentle halt, then guided it forward along the departure route toward the takeoff spot. It was sweltering in the cockpit but relief would come with a

climb to altitude where more acceptable temperatures prevailed. Mercker adjusted the handmade cardboard shield which he had wedged between his visor and helmet. This would serve as his "hood," and separate him from the clear weather outside. He was now one on one with the instrument panel.

"You've got it," Hayner said, relinquishing the controls.

"I've got it," reported Mercker, taking over.

"One Echo One Eight Four cleared for takeoff," announced a voice from the tower. Mercker acknowledged and began his takeoff, on the gauges all the way.



Above, after earning wings, HT-18 graduates could go on to CH-53s, like this one hauling an OV-10 during tests. Clockwise from above right: Huey departs line area at Whiting; Mercker with cardboard shield; and passenger's eye view of Hayner at the controls. Opposite page cartoon is by former VT-2 student, 1st Lt. Jayson Drake.



"These instrument takeoffs (ITOs) are critical," Hayner had explained earlier. "In heavy rain, or even good weather when launching from a dirt or snowbound field, the rotor stirs up debris and creates instrument conditions."

The *Huey* was quickly on its way up and away from Whiting. On the departure, helicopters could be seen swooping down and rising from a training field, practicing autorotations. T-34s, some in formation, others alone, were winging their way back and forth from home base. Inside Hayner's helo, conversation was limited and pointed. "Easy with the nose," he cautioned Mercker. "Lookin' good. There's your 60 knots."

Mercker was deeply immersed in the taxing business of flying an aircraft on instruments. His concentration was absolute. His hands and feet labored in response to what those circular gauges a couple of feet away told him. It was work. All work. And although the cockpit had cooled, beads of sweat were surely forming on the face of the young Marine officer behind the visor.

Despite the cloudless sky, a layer of haze reduced forward visibility. It was easier to see straight down where another *Huey*, its bright white and red color scheme contrasting sharply with the evergreen forest, flew along. A little later, high over a residential area, the aqua squares, ovals and rectangles of swimming pools peeked up through the haze. But Mercker had no time to contemplate them and the splashing refreshment they seemed to advertise.

The helo plowed steadily along the airway at 100 knots. Mercker struggled diligently and successfully to keep the machine on course. He noted the direction-finding needle swing 180 degrees indicating station passage at the navigational aid which served the civilian airport at Pensacola. The student pilot then smartly reduced speed and entered a holding pattern. After a few turns and Hayner's approval of them, Mercker received clearance to commence his letdown. Hayner

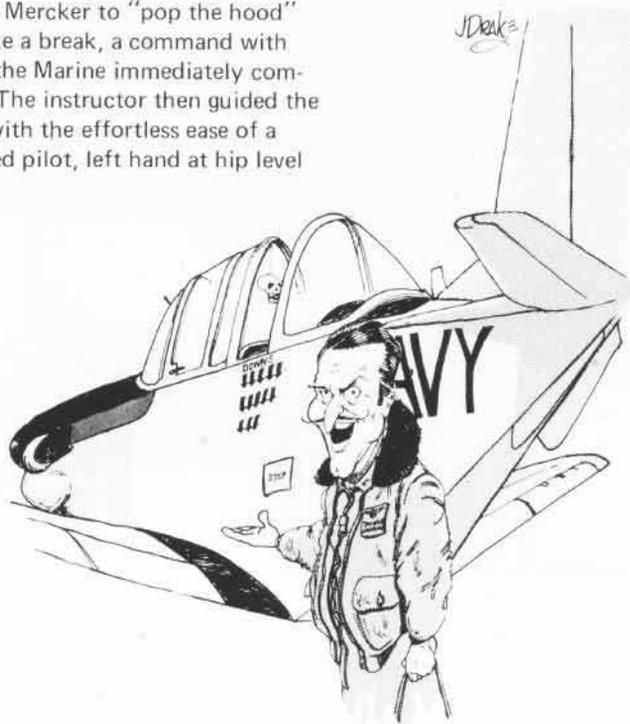
switched frequencies and the tempo of radio transmissions picked up. This was an annoying but natural consequence since the controllers in the tower below were handling many other takeoff, landing and transiting aircraft, all of which seemed to be on the same wave length.

Chatter on the air proliferated. The various transmissions were distracting and wore on the eardrums, especially Mercker's. Albeit unintentionally, the voices fought to break Mercker's focus of attention. Flying along straight and level at altitude monitoring the gauges, is one thing. Trying to descend, make verbal reports, respond to directives from the controllers, track precisely toward the runway, and maintain proper speed — all pretty much simultaneously — is another. Mercker made some mistakes. Hayner would probably have been surprised if he didn't. Altitude control was erratic close in to the field and his timing was a bit off. But all in all the approach was satisfactory.

After the climb-out and level-off for the return leg to Whiting, Hayner cleared Mercker to "pop the hood" and take a break, a command with which the Marine immediately complied. The instructor then guided the *Huey* with the effortless ease of a seasoned pilot, left hand at hip level

on the collective, opposite elbow casually poised on his thigh, gloved right hand lightly embracing the control column. He pointed out some shortcomings to his student and Mercker acknowledged them with the same fervency, laced with determination, that thousands of fledglings before him have known. The inflection in Hayner's voice was also typical. It was authoritative, perhaps stern, but also accommodating. Above all, pervading the atmosphere in the sun-bathed cockpit, was the intense concern that this training mission be productive.

Back on the gauges, cardboard shield in place, Mercker took the controls and piloted the *Huey* back toward Whiting. An hour had passed in this classroom in the sky when One Echo One Eight Four entered the ground controlled approach (GCA) pattern for a few circuits. These practice approaches would exercise Mercker's skill at precision air work. Tolerance for mistakes or deviations from speci-



"CHECKRIDES ARE NOTHING... JUST SIT BACK AND RELAX..."

fic flight paths have to be minimized in any instrument flying activity. But GCAs demand meticulous execution.

These flyers were young and vigorous men at work, so fatigue did not reveal itself even with the discomforting heat at their lower altitude. At the same time the drain on their physical and mental faculties was not insignificant. Mercker seemed to brace himself for the minutes of flying ahead. If there was another dimension to his ability to concentrate and work, he called upon it to serve him now.

The *Huey* wound its way around the pattern, ably guided by the Marine. The final approach was flown with a simulated-failed gyro. This required him to start and stop turns at the ground controller's discretion. Mercker misjudged his angle of bank momentarily, overcorrected a bit for it but got the *Huey* back where he wanted it and drove the machine safely on in. The approach completed, Hayner took over and Mercker pulled away the cardboard, clearly relieved that for him, the sortie was over.

A controller in the tower broadcast "One Echo One Eight Four, cleared through the hub," a focal point en route to the taxiways which led to the helo parking ramp. Flying slowly above the ground toward the HT-18 line, Hayner sensed a degree of apprehension in his student. He keyed the mike.

"You're going to be flying that check ride, Bill," he said firmly to Mercker. It was a vote of confidence and although Mercker's expression hardly changed, the words were welcome and full of significance.

In the end, it was difficult to measure precisely how much the student gained on this excursion in the Florida skies. Even on bad hops, which this was not, the knowledge garnered is substantial and augments the student pilot's data bank and experience log. Perhaps the dividends are not fully measured until people like 1st Lt. Bill Mercker and Ltjg. Paul Cappellino reach the fleet and put their capabilities to work with the likes of Lt. Larry Hayner.

Commander of the wing, Commodore Dickerson, has an attack mission background. He's flown F9Fs, FJs, A-4s and A-7s, and commanded an A-7 fleet replacement squadron (FRS), VA-122. "From my perspective, having been C.O. of the RAG," said the Commodore, "I believe we are getting better quality pilots today." This speaks highly of the job that training command instructors do because the first-tour aviator, fresh from receiving his wings, normally matriculates at an FRS before reporting to an assigned squadron. Experienced pilots at the FRS are readily able to judge the nature of that quality.

In reference to his personnel at Whiting, Dickerson commented, "I realize that some instructors who piloted high performance aircraft in the fleet, like the F-14, look upon the T-34 as a comedown from tailhook planes. It takes a lot of talent to master the complex systems of planes like the *Tomcat*. Some naturally feel that training command duty is not first-rate. My predecessors and I have been working to erase that image and slowly but surely are succeeding."

It also takes pronounced skill and patience to teach young people how to fly the Navy/Marine way. Being a good instructor requires knowledge and expertise in the air as well as on the ground. It also takes a lot of plain and simple hard work. "We have a well-oiled machine at Whiting," said the Commodore. "It's a credit to our people that it functions so well."

It is a never-ending job to keep the machine well-oiled. Training Air Wing Five and its counterparts throughout the training command complex must continue to supply the Navy with professional aviators who can satisfy the ever-changing and always-demanding requirements of Naval Aviation.

Plane captain preflights helo.





One T-34C passes over another.



Marine Capt. Greg Johnson, TraWing-5  
Instructor of the Year, 1979.

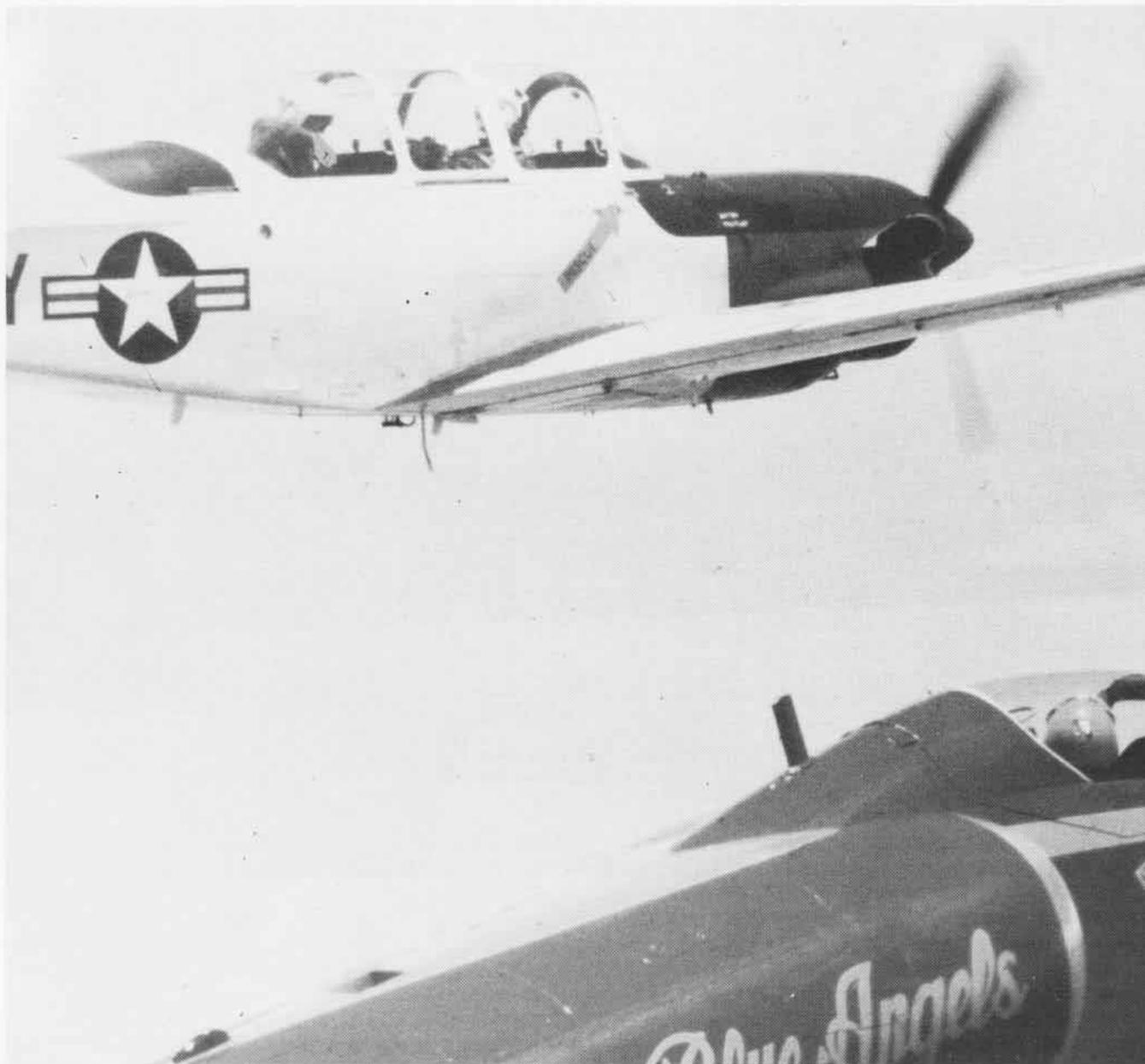
# MENTOR AND FRIEND

A steady rain fell on the parking ramps at Whiting, dousing row upon row of *Mentors*, *Trojans*, *Jet Rangers*, and *Hueys*. In the distance, filling the eastern horizon, was a grandiose wall of gray-black clouds. They

were the trailing remnants of a horrendous, but typical, summer thunderstorm which had swelled up in the Gulf of Mexico and swept through the Pensacola area.

Seemingly oblivious to the rain, Marine Capt. Greg Johnson of VT-2 trudged out to his T-34C, carefully looked it over and manned up for his third hop of the day. Greg, who has "Captain Honolulu" spelled out in reflective tape on the back of his helmet in deference to his home state, has more time in the turboprop *Mentor* than any of his counterparts. He was one of the first military aviators to check out in the aircraft. In fact, he has logged 1,600 hours in the plane. It is understandable therefore that he seems to wear the aircraft like a glove, even though his flying background is primarily in helos (CH-46s).

"It wasn't easy for me transitioning back to fixed wing



aircraft after being away and flying helicopters," he said about work in the training command. I enjoy the duty, of course. But it's the hardest I've ever had. If you want to be a good instructor," he explained, "and if you really care how your student performs, it is most difficult. At the same time, the experience has been very rewarding. When I first started out instructing, I got knots in my stomach. I felt I wasn't getting through to my students. But after awhile, things turned around. It's a great feeling when a student learns and you have been partly responsible for it."

Johnson made another point. "I feel that I have really learned how to fly at VT-2. I mean that in the sense that you never really know something thoroughly unless you have to teach it. I consider myself a complete aviator now." Greg, in fact, was recently selected as VT-2's Instructor of

the Year for 1979, a highly coveted award.

On this day, while the storm grumbled away in the distance, he fired up the engine, taxied out and was soon climbing to altitude, en route to a rendezvous with his C.O., Commander Ron Folsie. The skipper was on another mission with Lt. Roger White in the back seat of their T-34. Lt. White, also a VT-2 instructor, took the front cover picture. Once the aircraft were paired up, they would be joined, as was pre-briefed, by Lt. Jim Ross of the Navy's Flight Demonstration Squadron. Jim is *Blue Angel* No. Six and flies the *Skyhawk II*.

Happily, it was bright and clear in the working area along the Gulf Coast near Pensacola. It was as if the thunderstorm had scrubbed the sky clean and left in its wake a brand new chunk of sparkling airspace. And no sooner had the T-34s joined than a highly polished, blue-colored jet appeared at their three o'clock position.

"*Blue Angel* Six joining up," reported Jim Ross.

Lt. White began filming as Ross brought his radiant machine alongside Johnson's T-34. The *Mentor* and *Skyhawk* seemed hardly an arm's length from each other. Ross had his A-4 cocked up to hold his speed down in order to stay comfortably in formation with the T-34 which cruised at 180 knots.

It was a beautiful moment in the sky for everyone involved. Later, Greg Johnson would describe it as "one of the best flights in my life." No extraordinary maneuvers were performed. In fact the planes flew unexciting, constant-altitude, elliptical patterns throughout. The magic of it was in the sensation of being aloft on a gorgeous afternoon flying excellent aircraft in company with a *Blue Angel*. The event had overtones of glamor and glory. More important, all the participants were graduates of the Naval Aviation flight training syllabus and were thus unified by the special bond of a shared experience.

A few minutes later, after an abundant amount of film had been exposed to the red, white and blues of the aerial scene, Ross signaled he would detach from the formation which was about 5,000 feet above the ground. Suddenly, he stood the A-4 on its right wing and pulled away toward the south and the Gulf. Ross then pointed the *Skyhawk* straight down and dove earthward. Several seconds passed until, well ahead of the formation, streaking upward like a rocket, Jim Ross flew his bird through several vertical rolls. The maneuver was a sort of salute, an aerial exclamation point. He peaked out, then flew away, disappearing in the distance.

In a way, Lt. Ross was expressing the pure, sweet joy of flying. Everyone in that pocket of sky on this afternoon was part of that expression. Most flights at Training Air Wing Five may not be like this one. Even so, those in the wing and throughout the training command realize that the day-in, day-out work of teaching young men and women to fly the Navy/Marine Corps way is a very meaningful endeavor, one which is vitally important to the success of Naval Aviation.



Lt. Jim Ross, *Blue Angel* No. 6, is close aboard T-34C flown by Cdr. Folsie of VT-2.

Lt. Roger White, who took the front cover picture, is in rear seat.

## NAVAL AIRCRAFT

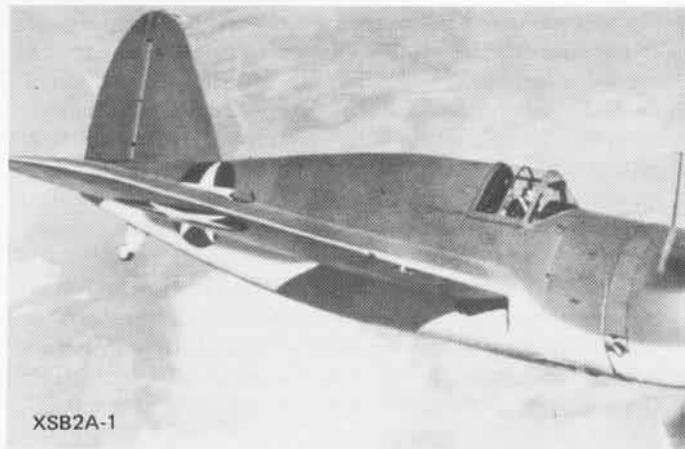
One of the new, attractive Navy aircraft introduced with much fanfare during 1941 was Brewster's XSB2A-1, subsequently named the *Buccaneer*. Having been ordered into production both for the Navy and for export (the British named it *Bermuda*) before the prototype was completed, it was widely touted as a potent combat dive bomber. As events turned out, it only served in operational training roles.

Along with the other winner of the Navy's 1938 scout bomber competition, (the Curtiss XSB2C-1, *NA News*, January 1974), the XSB2A-1 was a mid-wing monoplane, powered by a Wright XR-2600-8 1,700-horsepower engine. Both had internal bomb bays capable of carrying a 1,000-pound bomb, and a powered turret was provided for the gunner and his .50 caliber machine gun. Two synchronized .30 caliber guns and two wing-mounted cannons were to be the forward-firing armament in both new carrier-based dive bomber designs. A prototype of each was ordered in the spring of 1939.

For export, Brewster designed a non-carrier version without a powered turret and obtained orders from the British and Dutch for this model in 1940, prior to receiving the Navy's order for production SB2As. With many changes incorporated to reflect European wartime combat experience, the XSB2A-1 didn't make its first flight until June 1941. While the prototype was built in facilities at Long Island City, N.Y., and Newark, N.J., production was being set up in Brewster's new Johnsville, Pa., Navy plant — now the home of the Naval Air Development Center (NADC), Warminster.

Development flying continued into 1942 on the prototype; the Dutch order was taken over by the Navy, and production gradually got under way on both Navy and British contracts. Navy production versions were designated as SB2A-2 (non-folding wings), SB2A-3 (fully carrier suitable) and SB2A-4 (land-based, ex-Dutch contract). British *Bermudas* were delivered starting in mid-1942, with initial SB2A-4s and the first basic Navy version, an SB2A-2, following in the fall. Development and production problems resulted in continuing delays in deliveries. By this time, the decision had been made that SB2C *Helldivers* would replace the SBDs as carrier dive bombers, rather than using both SB2As and SB2Cs in the fleet.

The *Buccaneers* would therefore be used in operational training, with planned production reduced. Development of the SB2A-3 as the definitive carrier version of the *Buccaneer* was continued, providing a potential backup since the SB2C was also undergoing development and service problems. Initial operational training use of the SB2A-4s was at Jacksonville and Vero Beach, Fla. Subsequently, they were used for various training duties at other Navy and Marine Corps bases in the Southeast. Deliveries of all models continued through 1943, with 302 *Buccaneers* and 468 *Bermudas* completed when production ended in early 1944. Following a series of service problems, Navy operations were ended in mid-1944. The Johnsville plant had been shifted to production of the Vought F4U *Corsair* as the F3A-1, but reverted to the Navy in mid-1944 to grow into the present NADC facilities.





SB2A-4



XSB2A-1



SB2A-2

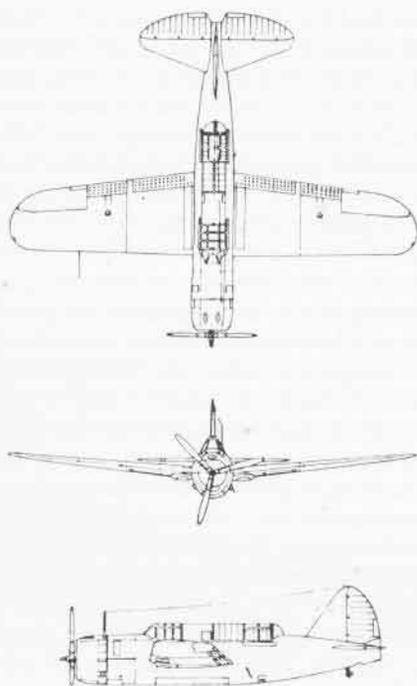


SB2A-3



SB2A

Span	47'
Length	39'2"
Height	15'5"
Engine	
one Wright R-2600-8	1,700 hp
Maximum speed	275 mph
Service ceiling	2,500'
Maximum range	1,750 miles
Crew	Two
Armament	
two forward-firing .30 machine guns	
two forward-firing .50 machine guns	
two .30 machine guns, flexible	
up to 1,000 lbs. of bombs	



Note: A volunteer group is currently working at NADC on restoration of the only two known, remaining Buccaneer/Bermuda airframes.

# SOLILOQUY

## PART V *More from the journal of an ex-Spad driver*

Boxing smokers were regular affairs during preflight and those who volunteered to fight were given weekend liberty, win or lose. I volunteered to box. It was one of the less astute decisions in my life. In the first place, my experience with gloved fisticuffs, ungloved as well for that matter, was limited to a single match as a high school sophomore. Three one-minute rounds during which my opponent bloodied my nose and I, his. The referee called it a draw. We had cider and doughnuts afterwards.

My seconds, Terry Ward, a halfback from Marquette, and Jerry Simonson, my roommate, for reasons unknown to me thought I could win. Ward was a redhead with the fresh, mid-western looks of the all-American boy. I had the feeling he should be going into the ring rather than me. Simonson was a compactly built Oklahoman with a boyish face which would give him an image of perpetual youth. He looked like he could handle himself in there as well.

Anyway, I was slated against a fellow from one of the advanced classes and I knew I was in trouble the minute I entered the gym and saw the ring, professionally rigged with ropes, timer and bell. A throng of boisterous, khaki-clad cadets, tiered in the fold-out stands which nearly reached the overhead seemed like patrons at an ancient Roman arena. This was a far cry from booster night back home when fifty onlookers were a crowd.

Someone pointed out my opponent. He was a deeply-tanned, handsome cadet with a weight-lifter's physique, complete with washboard mid-section and a look of grim assurance that seemed to beam out from his entire form like a sonar pattern. He was about two inches taller than my slim six feet.

Ward and Simonson wore ominous expressions, as if they had just come upon a gallows, until they saw me looking at them. At which point their jaws snapped shut and they rapidly fabricated smiles of confidence.

"You'll kill him," they said jointly, slamming me robustly on the back.

Ours was the third bout. While the crowd growled and cheered and yelped and whistled I gave myself a pep talk. It was about as effective as my seconds' fragile attempts to placate me by denigrating my opponent. Our time came. Limbering up in my corner I said to myself, "You've got to be tough to be a Naval Aviator. So be tough."

"You'll kill him!" cried Ward and Simonson.

A crescendo of cheers rose from the sloping walls of cadets as the bell rang. A prickly brush whisked around my stomach and my knees wobbled momentarily. But I puffed up, muttering "tough it out, tough it out." I jogged to center ring. So did the weight lifter, his look of grim assurance replaced now by one of sheer menace.

It was no contest. I saw a lot of leather that evening. It came at me repeatedly, fast and furious, in bulbous form. It stung. It altered brain cells.

In between the three rounds, Ward and Simonson insisted, "Go after him! Go after him!" I was so exhausted I could only bob my head feebly. I may have gotten in a punch or two but, in the end, I was unanimously declared the loser. I was still on my feet, however. The bruises were shortlived and I had two days off. It was some consolation when, a little later, I learned that my opponent had been on the boxing team of a Big Ten university. Less consoling was my discovery that Ward and Simonson, for their efforts, also received bonus liberty.

That was the last time I volunteered to box anybody, weekend pass or not.

Wickford's Shellfish was a small but popular concern on the bay near Warwick, Rhode Island. The Quonset Point air station was close also and more often than not when I journeyed in that direction, I carried with me orders for fresh lobsters to bring back to Oceana.

Late one October Sunday at Wickford's there was a commotion in progress. Around a holding tank, which was about the size of a pool table and a foot or so deep, a group of people were marveling at something.

"He's a granddaddy all right," someone cried.

"Biggest I've seen in 10 years," said another.

"My goodness!" exclaimed an elderly lady.

I squirmed my way through the onlookers to the edge of the tank. At first glance it looked like nothing more than a placid pool of water. Speckled dark green crustaceans were lounging there like the hard-shelled denizens of the deep they were.

Then suddenly there was a splash of water. A large claw tore up through the surface, scissored in the air, and

plopped back down. Several observers jumped back dampened by the spray.

"Twelve pounder, I bet," uttered one gentleman loudly.

"At least!" wailed a youngster.

The proprietor in heavy rubber apron broke through and fearlessly reached into the water in the vicinity of the portentous claw. He probed for a moment while the rest of us worried about the well-being of his submerged hand, then hauled, dripping, from the drink the largest lobster I'd ever seen.

Spread, the claws would measure three feet from tip to tip. The tail was as thick as a salami. The lobster waved those claws angrily and the sheer weight of it compelled the owner to lower it into the tank.

"Sir," I asked the man in the apron, "how would that giant taste if broiled properly?"

"The tail'd be a bit tough. Claws OK. Overall not bad."

Usually I purchased a load of one and a quarter-pound chicken lobsters at 65 cents a pound. Those were the days! They were succulent and of manageable size. But this monster was a rarity and the boys back at the hangar would get a kick out of it.

"How much?" I inquired.

"Ten bucks," said the proprietor.

"Sold," I said.

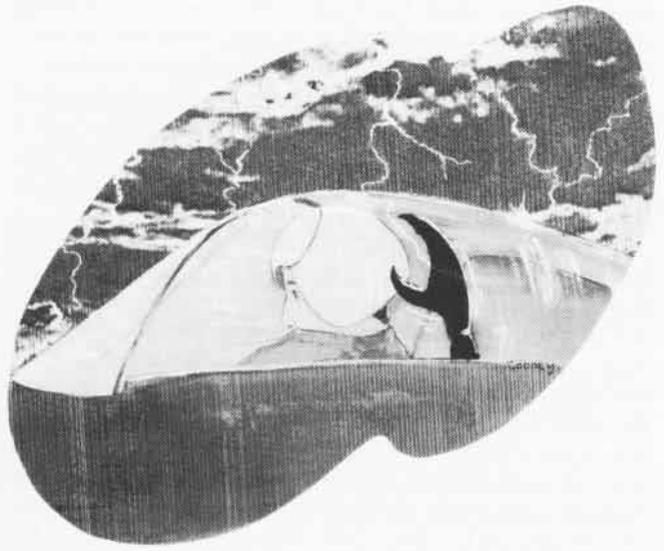
It and a dozen regulars were crated and secured nicely in the hellhole of my A-1. A storm was stirring off the coast but I figured I could beat the worst of it. It was dark-dark when I made a climbing turn toward the south. Because of the droning engine noise I couldn't hear the rolls of thunder in the billowing clouds to the west. But the crackling lightning, patterned like rivers on a map, was vivid enough.

Over Long Island the weather continued to percolate and the plane began to buffet against the unruly winds at the edge of the storm. As the *Skyraider* dipped and rose uneasily through the turbulence, it occurred to me that Halloween and goblin time were only a day or so away. And behind me, in the hold, was an unorthodox creature just frightening enough to suitably enhance a broomstick and pumpkin scenario. I was thinking of the twelve-pounder, of course, who by some weird instinct I decided to call Leo.

What with the rocking aircraft and the black of night and the flashing charges of electricity, I began to believe the witching hour was at hand. Abeam of Atlantic City I aimed my flashlight on the port wing. I was only at 8,000 feet but the outside air temperature had dipped and enough moisture was available to encourage formation of ice on the leading edge. Sure enough it was there. Not in sufficient quantity to inhibit the *Skyraider* noticeably but something to think about.

As I twisted slightly to place the flashlight back on the starboard console I felt a cold, clammy substance against my neck. My pulse quickened. My body stiffened. My eyes blossomed into coat buttons. If anything felt like a lobster claw against the flesh, that was it.

I cursed and against all reason reached back slowly behind my neck, fully expecting to shake hands/claws in



terror with a 12-pound grandfather lobster.

There was nothing there but my imagination — and a loose harness clamp, which was the villain. I shook my head vigorously, then shoved the mixture to full rich and the prop and throttle to normal-rated-power. I was going to hurry on home as fast as those 18 cylinders would get me there.

On the flight line at Oceana, the duty crewmen unstrapped the box of lobsters and set them on a flatbed trailer alongside my traveling bag. Inside the hangar I pried open the crate. Old Leo and his companions were there, groggy but alive. Relieved that it really was my imagination up there, I bravely grasped the huge denizen and held him up. He'd grown lethargic from the flight but was greeted with appreciative remarks by the crew.

The other lobsters were collected by their owners, but I kept Leo around for a couple of days during which his notoriety grew. He was a showpiece and visitors came from around the base to see him. However, there was a point at which I felt like an exploiter of one of nature's magnificent productions. It was time to end the affair. I was tempted to return him to the sea but reasoned the local waters would not sustain him. I tried the Virginia Beach seafood restaurants, figuring Leo might make a customer-luring display but he was rejected by all. Finally, I sold him to the BOQ manager at the base who converted Leo into a luncheon salad. I managed to dine elsewhere during the next few days until certain that that particular salad had been consumed.

Now and then in late October others look for black cats on the back fence and trick or treaters. I think of Leo, an unnerving touch on the neck at 8,000 feet, and the unanticipated wonders of flying the Navy way.

In the Mediterranean in the early 1960s, one of our *Skyraiders* limped into a divert field with engine problems. The scene was Mallorca, an island paradise in the western Mediterranean which lured sun-worshippers and fun-lovers from Scandinavia, the British Isles, West Germany, all over.

It was unfair but logical that Skipper Carrier send me in to oversee repairs. After all I had the benefit of experience in such matters, having spent two weeks in Pisa, Italy, on a similar mission. There was envy in the ranks and I *did* feel guilty about getting another plum. But not guilty enough to disobey the Skipper's orders.

An engine change was not required, just some major component changes. For nearly a week we put in a full day at the field and cavorted, rather conservatively, at night, just to keep the blood circulating. On the bleak side we had communications problems that far exceeded those in Pisa. Each day, phrase book in hand, I trudged up the ladder to the airfield's tower. I drafted messages updating progress, and asked that they be sent to the carrier. The Spanish controllers shrugged but were obliging. I felt as if our business intruded on their preoccupation with pleasure and the tourist trade. But they typed the words on blue onionskin and gave me info copies.

Back on board at the end of the sojourn, I descended to the ready room and was succinctly informed by the duty officer that the Skipper wanted to see me right away. The tone of his voice suggested trouble in the wind.

"Something wrong?" I asked.

"We haven't heard from you since you left," he said.

I stiffened. "Didn't you get my messages?" I asked.

"What messages?" he replied.

My heart sank. The communications network had failed me. Everybody figured I was too preoccupied with social matters rather than Navy business.

Skipper Carrier was at his desk when I entered his stateroom. His face reminded me of Mount Rushmore. "Well," he said flatly, "we wondered what happened to you."

I reached down to the shin level pocket of my flight suit, pulled out the crumpled blue onionskins, and handed them to him.

"Will this evidence hold up in court?" I asked.

He read through them carefully. Silence hung perilously in the stateroom. Finally, Mount Rushmore faded, animation returned.

"Case dismissed," he said, "glad you're back."

I'm an Aquarius but no advocate of astrology. However, somebody told me later that Aquarians tend to save things. Boy am I glad I saved those onionskins.

The Straits of Gibraltar were behind us as we plowed westward, having completed a half-year of operations in the Mediterranean. The ship needed to evaluate some radar gear, however, and an abbreviated, makeshift flight schedule was authorized despite a paucity of divert fields along the Atlantic sea lanes. A few A-1 and A-4 sorties would suffice in the next several days.

"You've got 97 traps," Skipper McKee said to me. "If you want 100 you can have the hops."

I did not fall over myself volunteering, as nice and uniform as the number 100 is. The fact was, few wanted these out and back, steady altitude, drone and moan flights. They would be dull, debilitating and occupy a mind-draining three hours plus to complete.

"Yes, sir," I said. "I'd love to."

Meanwhile there was Martin. He was in an air wing *Skyhawk* squadron a few kneeknockers down the passageway. He was a classmate from preflight, an aggressive and reputable pilot, and very much interested in achieving the 100-trap mark. He, too, was three slams-into-the-wires short. It followed that he maneuvered himself onto the schedule for a mad pursuit to the century mark.

It was a bit unusual for a *Spad* pilot to get more traps than one of the jet guys because our hops were generally longer in duration. Martin and his group would often get a pair of landings to our one. As luck would have it, over the course of the cruise, it seemed I was hovering by the duty officer's desk at all the right times when an extra, and normally short, test hop became unexpectedly available. They added up.

Anyway, Martin and I joked about who would hit the magic decimal first and treated the event with calculated nonchalance. But beneath the facetious banter lay a taut-jawed compulsion to get there ahead of the other guy. Naval Aviators tend to be competitive.

We were like the hungry gent who says he can really do without a steak as he eyes an irresistible delmonico sizzling on the grill.

Two days later we each had 99 arrested landings. The third morning I went out on the early go and got the one hundredth. Martin was scheduled for the second launch. I had noticed on one of my tracking runs to the west that some weather was building up. Nothing frightening. Mostly layered stratus clouds with a little precip inside.

But by the time Martin was ready to man up, air ops called down and cancelled the launch. My pal from preflight was furious. Magnifying that wrath was a subsequent announcement over the squawk box that flight operations had been terminated for the remainder of the cruise. He was stuck on 99.

I resisted all inclinations to snicker in victory. In fact, to Martin I said, "Look, 100 traps and a dime (this was 1963) will get you a cup of coffee anyplace."

I won't say there was smoke coming out of his eyes. I won't say he took it with a smile either. I will say I was very careful not to bring the subject up again.

One of the magic moments in Naval Aviation is the fly-off from the carrier after having been away for half a year or more. It meant getting home a day earlier than the others on the ship and was a romantic way to rejoin loved ones not seen for what seemed like an eternity. There was vigorous interest in the fly-off list in the days prior to the

event as the operations department in consonance with the Skipper compiled a line-up of those who would make the flight. With rare exception seniority ruled. By the time I was completing my third cruise I was eligible for the list even though I was still a bachelor in those pre-Vietnam days with no particular party waiting at Oceana.

We launched and grouped overhead in three divisions of four planes each. With a fine rumbling of engines we passed low over the ship in compact formation, honed to precision by months of steady operational flying and drove toward the beach. There wasn't an unexcited man in those dozen cockpits. I felt the stirrings of excitement, stirrings which were a prelude to certain jubilation, as much as the others. They were contagious. We were all smitten with them. They were especially in force for the married men whose wives and children, were equally kindled with anticipation.

We crossed the beach and the stirrings accelerated. All the familiar landmarks were there in the Virginia countryside but we were looking beyond them to the Oceana runways. The Skipper led us in for a flyover and we breezed by at a thundering 180 knots, each of us stealing a glance or two at the assemblage waiting by the hangar to welcome us.

We landed in turn with no one having to wave-off due to unprofessional disruption of interval. (Had this occurred, those involved would be marked men for a long time to come.) We taxied single file toward our ramp in sufficient emulation of the *Blue Angels*. However, despite my steadfast admiration for them, *Skyraiders* are not comely on the ground. They are tail-sitters, angled upward unlike the jets which, with their tricycle landing gear, are oriented parallel to the deck. And at taxi speed our engines chugged and expelled occasional inelegant clouds of smoke. Compared to the slim lines of the jets and the steady pitch of their turbines, we were cosmetically inferior. The fact that the tailpipe set had recovered ahead of us didn't help.

To compensate for such deficiencies we relied on neat spacing and uniformity of movement. Additionally, the Skipper had briefed us to fold our wings in punctilious sequence as we passed a certain point entering the parking ramp area.

We did so and this act, begun by the pull of a lever which brought hefty hydraulic forces into play, served us well. Unhinged, our wings rose up in a weird but modestly impressive salute to the loved ones.

We parked, shut down and disembarked, stuffing helmets into canvas bags which we slung over our shoulders for effect. We were on our own from that point and marched individually toward the people. There followed animated embraces, flashing smiles, unbridled tears and laughter. It was an altogether splendid reunion and I took pleasure in it as I lingered at the fringe, watching.

And then I saw my father! He was standing silent, well in the back of the crowd, not even waving. Just standing there, smiling subtly, waiting for me to catch his eye. I was dumbfounded. I had no idea he would be there. But he was.

Later he explained that my mother couldn't get away from her job but he had a few days coming, so decided to

drive down, "just to see the planes come in, you know."

He drove 600 miles "just to see the planes come in." A magic moment.

Southeast Asia, 1967.

We were flying low over the muddy shallows off the coast up north, Livesay and I, when my sump light came on. There's something about those red warning beacons and their sudden and blatant illumination which provokes shivers in the spine and stirrings in the stomach. Because we have been trained so well, however, the tempests are usually short-lived and we succumb to reason and a calculated, decision-making process.

Statistically, engine failure seldom follows a sump light but procedures demand that we *expect* the power plant to fail, and act accordingly. I keyed the mike, "Five zero four," I transmitted, "I have a sump light, turning east." Livesay rogered and drew up on my wing. We bent the birds around and took up a heading for the Coral Maru. I started to climb. We were still but a few miles off mainland North Vietnam.

"Watch your altitude," warned Livesay firmly. It was my first cruise in the theater of conflict and in that sense I was a rookie, Livesay, on his second, a vet. We were in the highly respected — feared is an alternate term that could apply here — SAM envelope. Close to the deck we were relatively safe, but increased height above the surface when within a certain radius of missile sites, was a no-no.

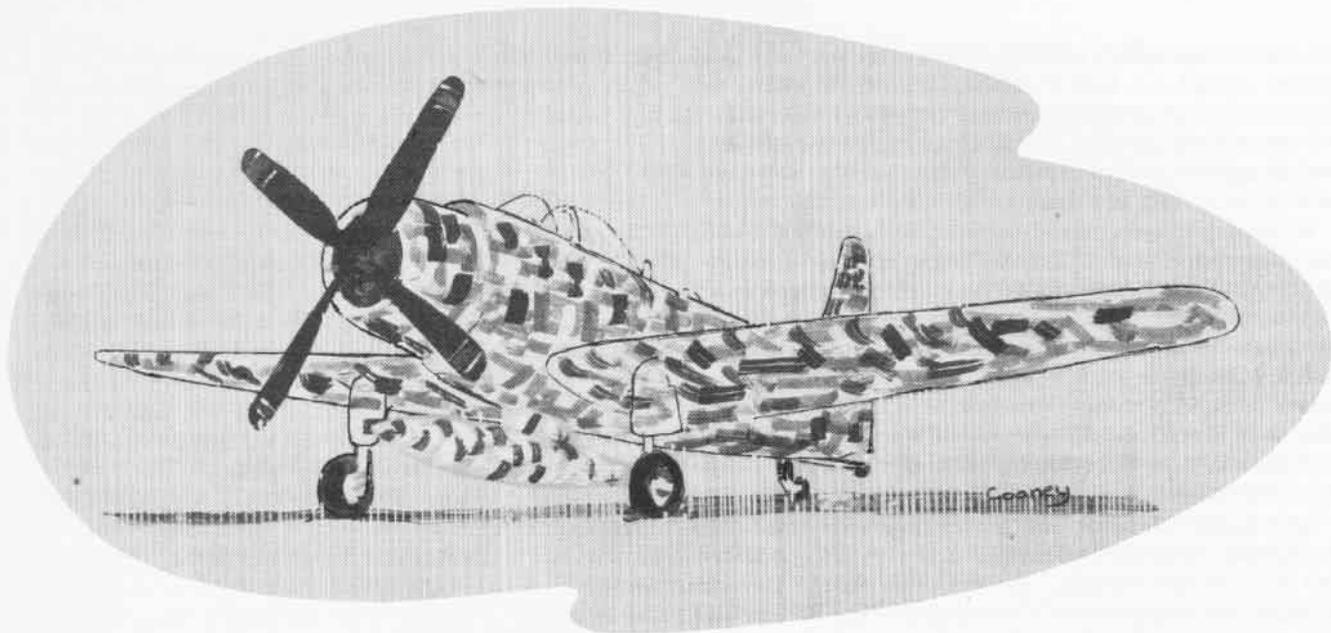
I pushed down quickly, embarrassed at my mistake. The engine ran perfectly even though the light stayed on. Our carrier was re-spotting planes for the next launch so I was directed to recover on *Constellation* next door which had a clear deck.

Trouble was, *Connie* had just begun a stand-down day, her first in more than three weeks. Her deck may have been clear but they would have to summon an LSO and a crew, not to mention mechs, to service my plane. I landed, high and fast all the way, talked things over with the mechs and waited around as they discovered a couple of minuscule metal fragments which had caused the sump light. These were removed and the R-3350 was ground tested for 30 minutes and cleared for flight. But the ship wouldn't try to launch me 'til next day. I was ushered below to the dispensary where I would stay the night in a spare bunk. Every other bed in the hotel was occupied.

While I slumbered amongst the forceps and tongue depressors, troops from *Connie* were busy with paint brushes on my plane. When I saw it in the hangar bay in the morning, my jaw dropped. It wore a patchwork pattern of rainbow colors, the length of the fuselage and on the tail and wings.

Funny?

Not funny. Our troops would have to spend many manhours cleaning the bird on top of their already substantial workload.



"Look," I pleaded, "tradition allows such pranks when one lands on the wrong carrier by mistake. I came here intentionally. There's a difference!" Tired heads nodded in agreement but, ultimately, I accepted fate.

I was catapulted off in late morning and, feeling uneasy about the reception I would get from our troops, whom I was dearly fond of, specifically Chief Waller, I flew back to *Coral Sea*.

Expectedly, the crew was dismayed. The Chief flung a few verbal accusations at his counterparts across the way, then ordered the paint removed. Waller was a superb maintenance man. He had silver, crew-cut hair, and a wise twinkle in his eyes which could convey a full range of emotions from supreme contempt to kind accommodation. I received a look somewhere in between and withdrew to the security of my stateroom, thinking about sump lights.

In between combat cruises, 1967-1968.

At Fallon, aside from flying which occupied most of our time, there were two activities which flavored the two-week weapons training interludes in the clear-aired Nevada desert. One of these was gambling. Ma's Roadhouse Inn was a landmark where Ma herself dispersed wooden coins that we exchanged for free drinks. We were thus softened up for the blackjack and roulette tables which she often manned in person. A kindly, honest lady, gray-haired and motherly, she was plenty shrewd with instruments of the gambler's world. If we lost, however, we blamed the cards, the dice or the one-armed bandits, never Ma. Naval Aviation, for reasons as patriotic as they were financial, was very big with her and most of the other Fallon establishments where games of chance flourished.

The pinball machines in the BOQ lounge were the focus of a second pastime. They represented a form of gambling

but with consequences less solemn than those involving felt-covered tables. We competed for beers and maybe a quarter now and then.

One of the delightfully noisy, colorful devices had special appeal. It featured a single set of flippers at the playing end which, if actuated in a timely manner, kept the silver ball "alive," swatting it up the slightly sloped face of the machine toward a battalion of strategically positioned plastic-covered lights. When struck, these electronically keyed targets increased the score which was recorded on the face of the upright portion of the machine by a digital type, readout window.

In the center of the sloped board, amidst the battalion and framed by rudder pedestals, was a narrow opening through which, one at a time, passed a series of metal placards of varying numerical value. They marched by mechanically like ducks at a shooting gallery. More points could be tallied here so smart players concentrated on them rather than targets in the periphery. The idea was to keep each of the five balls per game in action, careening geometrically as long as possible, avoiding to the last, their disappearing plummet through an opening aft of the flippers.

When a crescendo of bells and chimes combined with the rapid clacking of the scoring mechanism, this was a sure signal that a player was having a good run.

In the back of my father's tobacco and magazine shop in Hamilton, N.Y., we had, over the years, a progression of pinball machines, and frankly, I cut my teeth on them. So it was with jut-jawed confidence that I pursued, along with Marcus, my partner — who trained in various pool rooms, bowling alleys and recreational facilities in the great state of Texas — the Air Wing Pinball Championship. It was informally conceived but proved to be a competition which lured quite a few fellows into it.

Throughout the first week we were unstoppable. By a process of elimination we fended off a string of worthy contestants and were riding high. Action peaked in the evenings and we reveled in the cheers and jibes from flyers in sweat-wrinkled flight suits who formed around us in horseshoe-shaped crowds, sometimes three deep.

Marcus and I were jauntily as we entered week two of the deployment. We handily dispatched three sets of challengers Monday night. Tuesday afternoon, he and I flew a combined rocket and gunnery hop and completed a night bombing mission on our favorite range, old Seventeen Echo, before convening in the lounge. We had pulled a lot of Gs, collectively, and were satisfyingly fatigued after a day and night in harness. But we were not too tired for a little flipper action and accepted a match with two gentlemen from one of the *Skyhawk* squadrons.

I recognized the lieutenant but the commander was new, having just checked into his outfit as X.O. He had a lean, dark look about him. His complexion was swarthy, his eyes black. And a neatly-trimmed mustache fortified his Latin good looks. He projected an intensity and self-assurance that presumably bode him well in the cockpit. Here, in the lounge, they gave him the demeanor of a suave night club owner straight out of a George Raft movie.

He approached the device tentatively, flipped the flippers several times and examined the machine as if it were a patient on whom he was about to commence surgery. Marcus and I exchanged wary glances like a couple of prospectors whose gold nuggets were in jeopardy in face of the new gunfighter in town.

The games began. The commander quickly and convincingly had the machine humming and obeying his every flip like an obedient robot. The pings and chimes and clacks were rapid and numerous. The lights flickered brightly, the balls blurred toward targets with startling accuracy and the score rose at an unprecedented rate. We had come up against a ringer.

"Where ya from, commander?" I asked during a break in the action.

"Bayonne, N.J.," he said. "I cut my teeth on machines like these."

It was a statement of fact rather than a boast and he carried his team to a resounding triumph over us. I was grateful to him for not being obnoxious in victory.

Unseated from our pinnacle, Marcus and I retreated quietly from the lounge as the horseshoe of observers cheered the new champions.

"The trouble with Naval Air," I said dejectedly to Marcus as we walked down the darkened corridor to our rooms, "is that sooner or later, no matter where you go, you always run into somebody who is better than you are."

It was a clear but moonless night and we had been over Laos working with forward air controllers who lit targets for us with flares. Safety, or should I say survival, depended on a mastery of instrument flying and an acute sense of

where your fellow flyers were in the sky, especially during strenuous, high G pull-ups from diving runs.

En route to the ship, about 10 miles offshore, I looked back. My field of view encompassed a span from just below the demilitarized zone north to the central coast of North Vietnam. Perhaps it was a weird coincidence or just an unusual perception on my part, but that section of the world as I looked at it wore a striking pattern of lights, startling silver-white on pure black.

At varying altitudes parachute-retarded flares were moving like slowly descending stars toward the earth. Rising from the ground in sporadic bursts, presumably aimed at the stars and the airplanes which had dropped them, were slim fingers of ground fire, some solid lines, some like a sequence of hyphens. Cauliflower-shaped flashes signaled bomb impacts.

In a few seconds the lights went out and the horizon was dark again. It would ignite once more soon enough. But as we flew on I wondered if it was a paradox that violence and all the ramifications of it could accompany such wondrous beauty.

After several non-flying years on shore duty, knowing that a cockpit tour was no longer part of the future, I jumped at the opportunity to ride in the back of a two-seat *Skyhawk*, the same plane I'd flown as an instrument instructor.

We went up over the Sierras in California on a gorgeous autumn morning. The pilot asked, "Would you like to fly it?"

"Of course," I said.

"You've got it, then!" he said.

I jiggled the stick confirming I had the controls and he threw up his arms signaling he was off them.

It's like riding a bicycle. You don't forget how. It comes back to you quickly. Of course there's not that much to do at altitude. We drove along enjoying the scenery and I managed to keep the bird reasonably level during a steep turn or two.

Another hop on another day some time ago on the other side of the country clicked back through my mind. I was flying a senior officer from Cecil Field north to Andrews where he had to attend a meeting in nearby Washington, D.C. His active flying days were behind him and when I asked if he'd like to fly for awhile he enthusiastically took over and didn't surrender the machine until a couple of hours later on final approach.

"These days," he said after we had shut down and were walking toward operations, "I appreciate every moment of stick time I can manage. Thanks. It was a tonic."

Over the Sierras, too few years later, the coin had flipped. Now it was me grabbing at minutes which passed too quickly. We were soon back on the ground, trekking to the hangar.

"Thanks," I said to the pilot, "it was a tonic. Served in a shot glass," I added. "But better than no tonic at all."

# PEOPLE · PLANES · PLACES

## Rescues

Vietnamese refugees, adrift in a 35-foot boat in the South China Sea with no provisions, were rescued due to the efforts of VP-9's Crew One, flying out of Cubi Point. Led by Lt. John Hoyt, the P-3C *Orion's* crew dropped both food and water to the vessel's occupants and then located and notified a Japanese tanker which subsequently picked up the refugees. To aid the boat people in recovering the dropped provisions during the moonless night, crew members



taped strobe lights from their personal survival gear to each of the containers. Those lights also served to signal the boat's position during the six-hour rescue evolution. In photo, AW2 John Braithwaite, left, and AW3 Pat Hall watch as Ltjg. Dave Hegland attaches strobe lights to a packet of emergency rations.

The flashing red, white and green anti-collision lights of the P-3 *Orion* disappeared in the darkness as an anxious mother fought back tears of mixed hope and despair at the hospital. Her husband, SSgt. Donald Brookover, Jr., USAF, and son flew toward Germany, in hopes of saving the injured boy's sight. The seven-year-old had been playing in his backyard and stumbled against a sharp-spiked plant which pierced his eye. His mother rushed him to the Lajes AFB hospital. Jacksonville's VP-62 was conducting active duty ops at Lajes. The squadron flight surgeon, Cdr. C. M. Harris, an ophthalmologist, recommended surgery within six hours in order to save the boy's sight. Arrangements were made for VP-8's Crew Five to transport the child to Germany, where an Army hospital could provide the specialized instruments required for the delicate operation, which was a success.

## Honing the Edge

The *Sunday Punchers* of VA-75, Oceana, proved the A-6 *Intruder* can be effective in the complex offensive/defensive ACM role when they participated in the Felix Invitational. The squadron fought well during the annual fighter derby hosted by VF-31. Opponents included such diverse aircraft as F-15s and F-106s from Langley AFB, and F-4s, F-14s, F-5s, A-4s and A-7s from Oceana.

Navy's first general purpose amphibious assault ship, *Tarawa* (LHA-1), completed her first deployment in September, participating in five major amphibious operations and making visits to Pearl Harbor, Okinawa, Subic Bay, Manila, Hong Kong and Singapore, and ports in Thailand and Korea. *Tarawa* combines features of four different ship types in a 778-foot-long, 39,000-ton hull. During deployment, helicopters and AV-8 *Harriers* were operated from her flight deck, recording more than 5,000 accident-free landings.

## Awards

Two *Gunfighters* of VF-124 received Navy Commendation Medals during a ceremony conducted by Cdr. Jerry L. Unruh, C.O., Lt. Robert Willard and Ltjg. Darryl Williams were heralded for saving an F-14A *Tomcat* which experienced flap asymmetry and went out of control during a student familiarization flight.

Whiting Field's VT-6 was awarded the 1979 VAdm. Robert Goldthwaite Award. Sponsored by the Columbus Aircraft Division of North American Rockwell, it is presented in recognition of outstanding achievements in the training of Naval Aviators and NFOs within the Naval Air Training Command. The award is named after the man who, while serving in numerous capacities, contributed significantly to the training command.

Two squadrons were awarded Meritorious Unit Commendations. VP-10's *Red Lancers* were recognized for service in national defense while deployed to Bermuda from August 9, 1978, to February 8, 1979. The *Challengers* of VF-43 were commended for implementation and development of Atlantic Fleet air combat maneuvering training. Respective C.O.s are Cdr. K. D. Sullivan and Cdr. E. T. Smith.

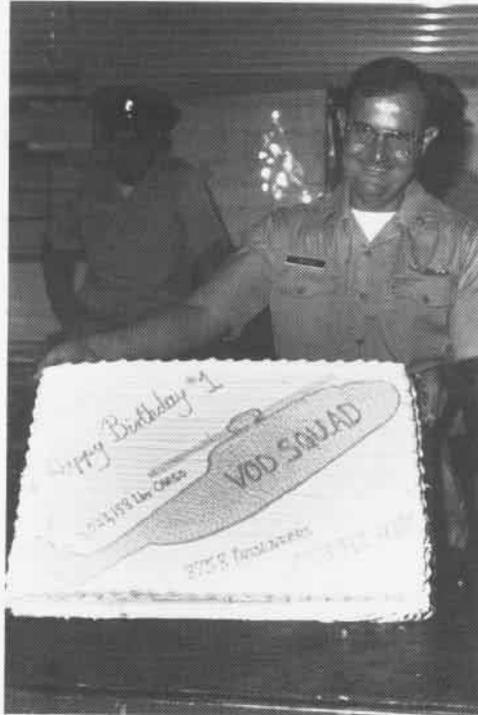
VTs 10 and 86 picked their respective Instructors of the Year for 1979. They are Lts. Marc D. Wall and Gary B. Hudspeth.

## Decommissioned

RVAH-3 ended 23 years of service when it was decommissioned August 17, 1979. It had been a replacement training squadron since 1958, preparing aircrews to fly and maintain *Skywarriors* and *Vigilantes*. The *Dragons* accumulated 12,000 accident-free flight hours in the last four years.

## Et cetera

AMCS Cordie Morgan displays the cake which helped celebrate the first anniversary of operations for the RH-53D *Sea Stallion* in VR-24. Commanded by Cdr. R. D. White,



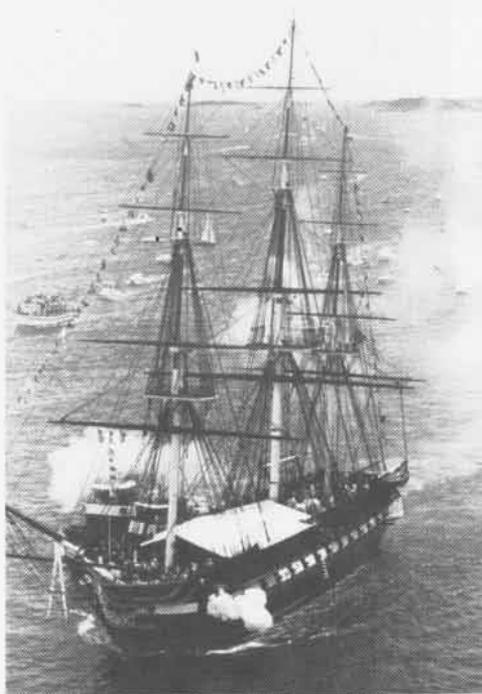
the squadron began operating three RH-53Ds in June 1978 when it became the first and only squadron to operate all the basic types of aircraft: helos, props and jets. Since then the VOD Squad has carried record numbers in cargo and passengers, maintaining a high percentage of readiness due to the efforts of maintenance and aircrew personnel.

Naval Aviators and personnel from the Superintendent of Salvage Office joined the battle against the largest oil spill ever. The oil, appearing off the south Texas coast, came from a blown-out well in the Mexican Gulf of Campeche and began spewing 20,000 barrels of oil a day on June 3. Two P-3A

# PEOPLE · PLANES · PLACES

*Orions* assigned to ComResPatWingLant were ordered to Corpus Christi to fly surveillance missions over the Gulf. The aircraft, flown by 16 reservists and 8 active duty personnel, carried oceanographers and mapping experts to study and plot the spill.

HS-74, South Weymouth, provided aerial photo coverage for the Independence Day salute on July 4 during the turnaround of *Constitution* in Boston. SecNav W. Graham



Claytor, Jr., fired the first round of the 21-gun salute as the frigate cruised the harbor. LCdrs. Peter Hailer and Ernie Ross piloted the H-3; AW3 Bruce M. Schnepfer was crewman.

When he joined the Navy, AW2 Rick Myllenbeck told his father, who flew P-2s, "I want to fly in P-3s." With determination and hard work, Rick realized his dream. Today, he flies aboard an *Orion* as a sensor station operator attached to VP-47, Moffett Field. "Flying is in my family," says Myllenbeck, whose grandfather flew in WW I, father



in WW II and whose brother is a P-3C sensor station operator on the East Coast. Rick receives his aircrew wings from his father, Warren, in front of a P-2 *Neptune* which a check in the log book revealed his father had flown. Cdr. R. L. Testwuide, C.O. of VP-47, looks on.

## Change of Command

H&HS Yuma: Maj. Theodore D. Owens relieved Maj. Frank L. Kocevar.

HS-4: Cdr. Robert A. Wildman relieved Cdr. William R. Jenkinson.

NAEC: Capt. Richard D. Friichtenicht relieved Capt. John H. Hoganson.

NARU Jacksonville: Capt. William H. Saunders III relieved Capt. Edmond M. Feeks.

NAS Moffett Field: Capt. Ronald F. Marryott relieved Capt. John M. Quin, Jr.

ResTacSuppWing: Capt. Horst A. Petrich relieved Capt. Albert W. Howard, Jr.

VA-22: Cdr. Jerry Palmer relieved Cdr. John Grice.

VA-145: Cdr. David D. Williams relieved Cdr. John Juan.

VMA-131: LCol. Brooks C. Dyer relieved LCol. James R. Shea.

VR-57: Cdr. John E. Bentley relieved Capt. William J. Moyer.

VT-10: Cdr. Charles P. Downs relieved Cdr. William C. Ackerman.

# TIME TO STAY

## Guard III Program

The purpose of the guaranteed assignment retention detailing program is to guarantee assignment as a reenlistment incentive to all career petty officers, and eligible E3s, with less than 25 years service. Guard III is also designed to encourage direct contact between reenlistment-eligible persons who are approaching the expiration of active obligated service (EAOS) and their detailers in the Naval Military Personnel Command.

Guard III provides for two guaranteed assignments: one must be used at first reenlistment and the second may be used anytime within the six months prior to EAOS.

Guaranteed duty assignment means either a type ship, squadron or home port for sea duty or for shore duty in a specific geographical location requested by you.

If your PRD and EAOS are approaching and you are due for sea duty, and have experience in any of the following aircraft, Guard III assignments are available to the following locations: F-14, F-4, A-6, NAS Oceana, Va.; F-14, F-4, NAS Miramar, Calif.; A-7, NAS Lemoore, Calif.

If you are an E5 or above coming up for shore duty, Guard III assignments are available for aviation programs recruiters in Naval Recruiting District, New York and Naval Recruiting District, Chicago.

Also shore duty assignments are available as recruit company commanders at RTCs Great Lakes and San Diego.

For further information on these and other opportunities under the Guard III program, check with your command career counselor.

## AE2 Kent Alexander

Reenlisted on board VS-22 at NAS Cecil Field, Fla., for four years.

"My reasons for reenlisting are very concrete. The economic situation today makes job security and medical benefits reason enough. However, there is much more. The many opportunities for self-improvement and the added bonus of the Guard III program, which enabled me to receive what I consider to be ideal orders with a guarantee of no surprises, made up my mind.

"During the past three years I have been attached to VS-22 which I consider to be a fast-paced, operational squadron. I have enjoyed the feeling of achieving high aircraft availability and the partnerships formed between maintenance crews that made it all possible.

"In my future duties as an instructor at VS-41 Framp, I hope that I will be able to convince my students that the Navy is what you make of it. The opportunities are here."



## Duty in Japan

There are about 30 openings for senior aviation ratings (E6 through E9) in Carrier Air Wing Five aboard *Midway*, homeported in Yokosuka, Japan. Personnel with the following qualifications are being sought to volunteer for 36-month accompanied tours or 24-month unaccompanied tours:

AF	E9 with F-4 experience
AV	E9 with A-6, A-7 or E-2 experience

AMS/H	E6-E8 with F-4, A-6, A-7 or H-3 experience
AD	E6-E8 with F-4 or A-7 experience
AQ	E6-E8 with F-4 or A-7 experience
AE	E7-E8 with F-4 or A-6 experience

Interested persons can get additional information by contacting Cdr. R. E. Smith (NMPC 404), autovon 291-5835 or commercial 301-427-5835.



## Picture Taking Marines

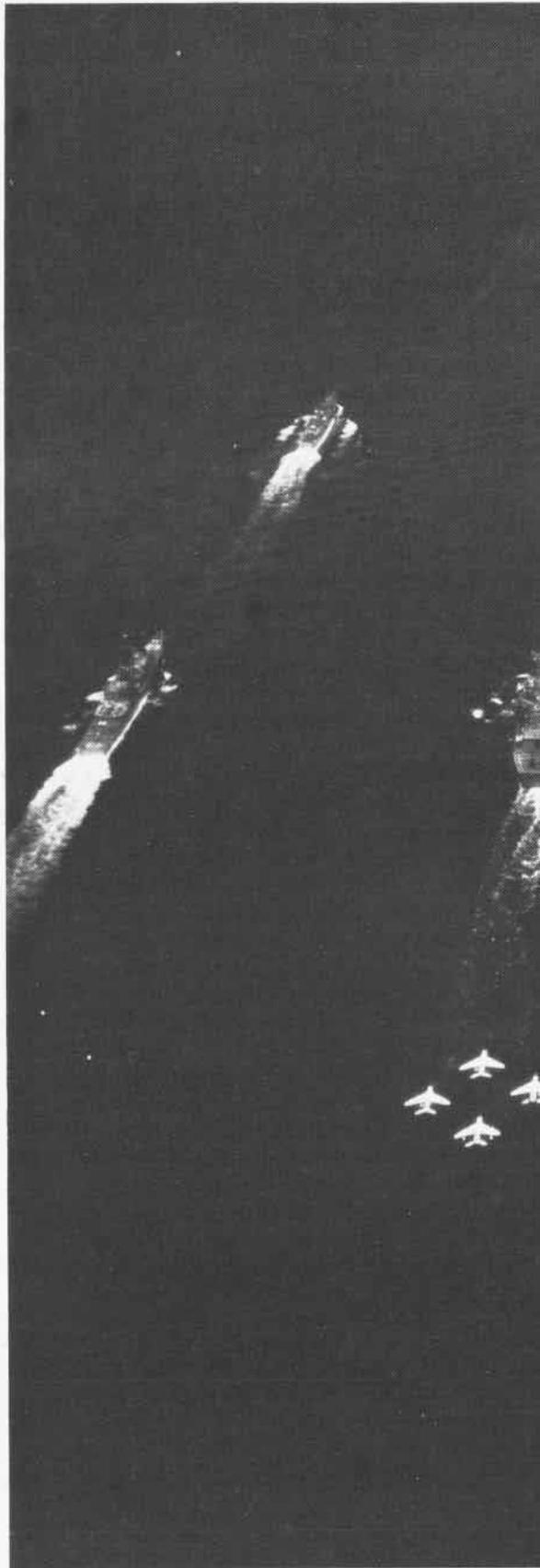
The mission of the 112-man Det 2 of Marine Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron Three, currently aboard *Midway* (CV-41) as part of Carrier Air Wing Five, is to provide Rear Admiral R. E. Kirksy, Commander, TF 77.4, with a multisensor recon air arm.

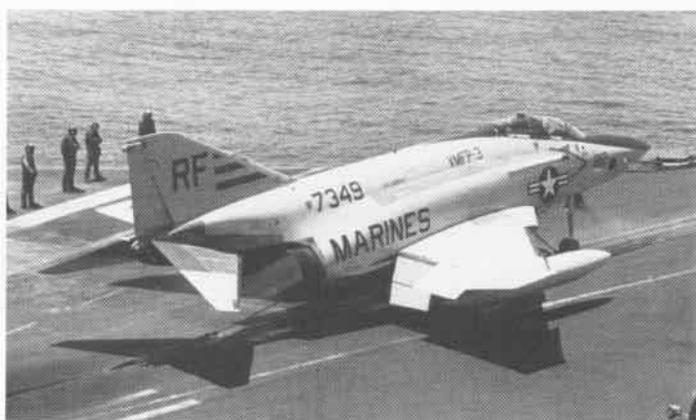
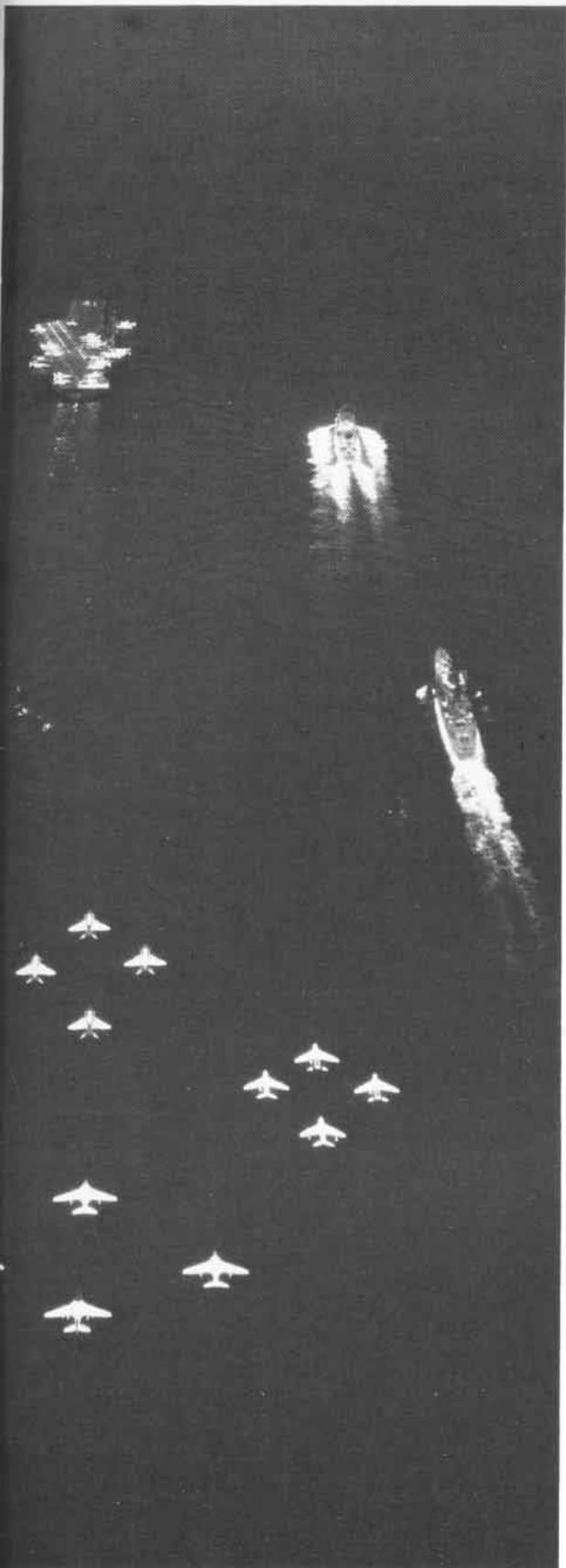
This series of photos follows one such task — provide a photo of TF 77.4, with representatives of the wing in the air.

Above, Maj. W. L. Beam, OinC of Det 2, plans the mission in the detachment's ready room. Top to bottom, opposite page, film is loaded on the RF-4B; Maj. Beam and Capt. C. W. McSpadden are given the go-ahead and the *Phantom* is hurled down the flight deck and into the air; RF-4B returns to *Midway*. Photo at right is the finished product.

During its two-month Indian Ocean deployment aboard *Midway*, the detachment recorded 192.5 flight hours, a 90 percent boarding rate with 98 traps in the unit's two RF-4Bs.

*Midway* and CVW-5 were recently awarded the Navy-Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal for their efforts in the Indian Ocean.





\*\*\*\*\* (continued from November) \*\*\*\*\*

In May, a German submarine placed four mines in the entrance of Hampton Roads. They sank four ships. The submarine then attacked unarmed vessels and freighters in the coastwise shipping lane. The Navy organized an aerial submarine patrol in an attempt to locate it. Our Miami station covered the southern area, using cadets and training planes.

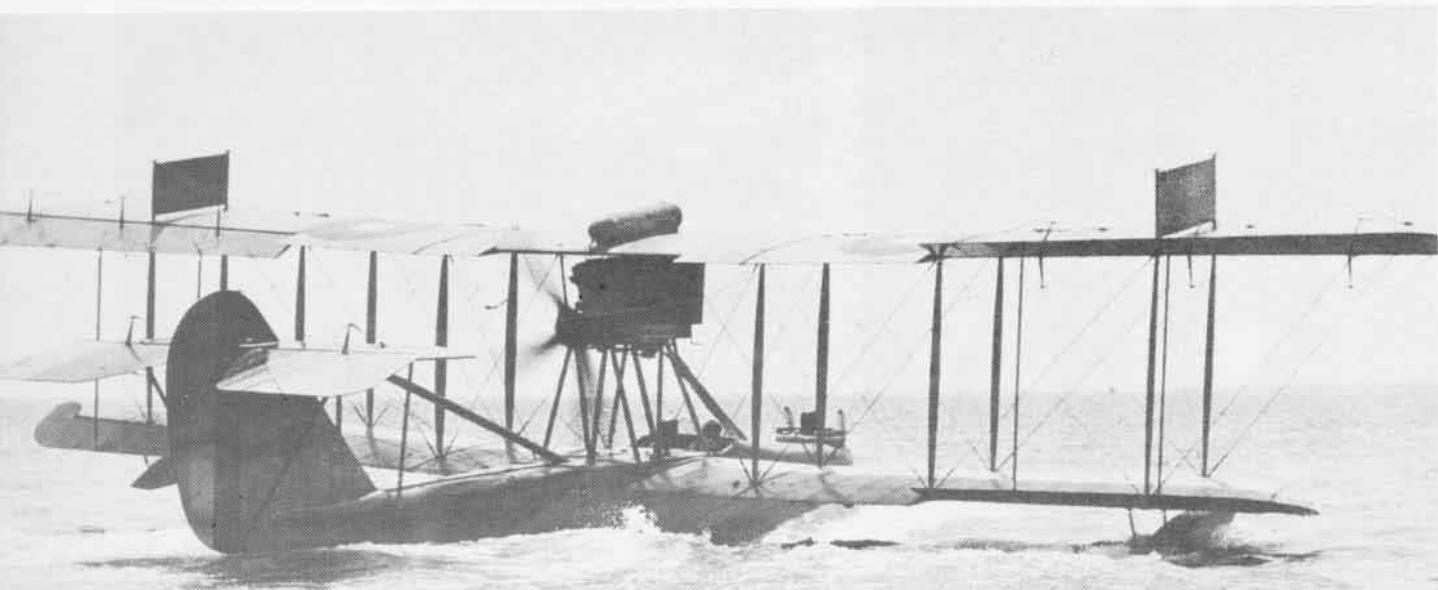
On my second patrol, I flew as navigator for Bill Loghes, an experienced pilot. We were on the outer edge of our course when the engine failed. The surface of the water looked like it

had waves we could negotiate, but when we came down, we found that the swells were about 100 feet between crests. The rising water struck the front of the pontoons and threw us up about 40 feet, into a stall. The plane jackknifed and we hit with a bang on the right pontoon. With a third of our right wing in the water, it was apparent that any sizable wave would break up the plane.

We had to get that wing out of the water somehow. We used the age-old method of bracing fence posts and sagging gates. Our survival kit con-

tained a pair of pinchers with wire cutters which had a screwdriver shape on the end of one handle. We cut flying wires from the wings, 3/16-inch cables, and put two strands between the stress points. By twisting them we gained two to four inches on each bite. With a series of bites we got the four struts fairly straight, and the wing was up. Then we put on directional stays and braces in the same manner so that our repair was even stronger than the undamaged left pontoon.

We had come down about 0600. By 1100 we were seated back to back on the top wing; each scouting half the



## No Proven Formula

By G. L. Huiskamp, NA 308

Golden  Eagles

horizon for ships or planes. We knew we had come down outside the shipping lanes in the Gulf Stream, which was carrying us at five miles an hour in a northeast direction, and we knew that by noon we were 30 miles from our landing place – out of the patrol pattern.

About 1130 a school of sharks gathered about the plane. The sea was calm and they were swimming around just under the surface with their black dorsal fins sticking out of the water about 25 yards away. We floated for 14½ hours before we were rescued.

That evening, with a small storm developing southeast of us, our hopes were very low. At sunset we thought we saw some smoke on the eastern horizon. Loghes fired one of our red flares into the air and we waited anxiously, a long time – at least a minute and a half. You can imagine our emotions when we saw a white rocket soaring into the sky on the horizon. Very soon we could see the black dot of the ship's hull getting larger and larger as it approached. In no time at all the Coast Guard patrol ship *Eagle* was alongside sheltering us from the waves. One of the first things the captain did was ask us if we were injured. Then he fired a double line with a hook and pulley across to the plane and we secured it. Next he sent over a steel towing cable and a hawser. These we placed properly and made our way hand-over-hand to the ship.

We were treated royally on *Eagle*. The captain took us to his cabin, questioned us, sent for dry clothes and ordered a fine special dinner. He told us that Capt. Mitscher had sent a wireless message asking for a special search for us. He had found us very near the spot that Mitscher had thought we would be. *Eagle* hoisted our plane onto her stern and we headed for Miami. At 1100 the next morning we were on our ramp at the station. We owed our rescue to Capt. Mitscher's habit of doing everything he could do to get his pilots and planes back. He had figured our position just

as we had and sent a special ship for us.

Mitscher also had a habit of sending pilots who had experienced crashes on immediate flight assignments as soon as they were able. Loghes and I were sent on patrol right after lunch. Loghes with another navigator and I as navigator for another pilot. Flight Officer Cummings told me he was impressed by the way we had gotten the plane wing out of the water. He said that the riggers in the repair hangar had burst into laughter when they looked at it. They called us the Hay-wire Kids.

About a month later, an admiral came to visit and the captain decided to put on a demonstration of formation flying. Townsend was named to lead, Mandeville took the right wing and I the left. We practiced in three new training planes. With only a 10-mile speed band, no fancy stuff could be done, only steady position flying, with the leader throttling back a little to compensate for our plane differences and turbulence. The wing planes flew about 100 feet back of the leader, about 40 feet above the forward plane.

On the demonstration flight, during our climb to 3,000 feet in formation, I noticed that there was something different about the leader. His turns were too sharp and he had not throttled back his motor to compensate for the differences in speed which usually existed. I suddenly realized we had a substitute lead. Mandeville's plane, on the right, had the same speed as the leader's, but my plane, on the left, was slightly slower. I lost altitude on straightaways. I could climb a bit in the inside lane on turns and thereby slow my speed and parallel Mandeville's position. On our last turn into the straight leg to fly over the station, our formation was in a proper order. I tried to tell the leader to throttle back because, when I maintained my altitude, I gradually fell behind. But the leader motioned me to come up.

I nosed over and sacrificed about 20 feet of altitude and maintained that altitude. The leader turned again and noticed that I had lost a little altitude and had come a little bit closer but was falling behind again. He motioned violently for me to come up into position because we were approaching the station. (He wanted to have a good formation over the station.) I nosed down a little while he watched me until I was exactly level with him. Then he gave a left-turn signal and threw his plane into a left-flipper turn. I pulled my plane up, into a quarter loop, and missed the top of his raised wing by about six inches. Then, from standing on its tail, my plane fell off into a vicious spin.

I came out of it at about 1,500 feet and flew directly back to the ramp at the station. Lt. Cummings asked me why I spun out of the formation. I was so angry I could scarcely talk but, when I calmed down a bit, I told him exactly what had occurred. He simply said, "I'll check it out and talk to you tomorrow." The next day, Cummings explained that the pilot who had led us in the formation was an officer (promoted from Key West and raised in rank) who had asked for the privilege of leading the flight. Capt. Mitscher, thinking he was experienced, said to clear with Cummings. He took the blame because he was responsible for clearing pilots for assignments. He said the pilot who had led our formation had not only never led a formation before but had never even flown in one.

Another circumstance which may have contributed to my coveted reputation as a resourceful pilot occurred when Lt. LaMarr, Commander of the Sixth Squadron, checked me for transfer to advanced flying at Pensacola. After a half hour of getting out of spins, landing to the mark, making precise turns and spirals, we landed for a conference. He said, "What's this business with the rudder? You seem to keep it in almost constant play."

I explained that in my experience with boats and waves, I found, that if I let the hull take the wave naturally without ruddering against it, the far side of the wave gave the hull an equivalent correction. If it didn't make correction, a slight rudder assist would, and I could make better headway. Only one-fourth of the rudder back-pressure was necessary as compared to using the rudder on both sides of the wave. In flying these planes, before you hit a bump, you can first feel pressure, right or left, on the rudder and then a lateral wing move occurs. I avoided sharp counter-pressure on the rudder and simply let it take the air stream angle, giving the plane its head. I was also easy with the aileron unless lateral action was extreme. When you pass through the far side of the bump there is ordinarily a correction. If not sufficient, you correct it with a little rudder, only applying a minimum of aileron. I told him it improved the speed about two miles per hour.

He looked at me skeptically and I said, "Why don't you try it?" He flew about 15 minutes, playing with it, and came down and said, "By God, it works." He cleared me for Pensacola.

The most exacting flying we did at Pensacola was night flying. On clear nights you have horizon and a great deal of visibility. Flying on such nights with a moon was almost like day flying; but a low cloud cover, fog, or haze requires more instruments than we had. A barge was anchored-in-position with two flared lights giving us a light track across the water for landing. When we took off against these lights we went into darkness. I spent, what seemed like about 36 hours one dark night, in three hours of actual flying, with no horizon and only one small channel light five miles down the bay. This gave me sea location and plane angle if I could judge it right. On climbout I rocked the plane with the

ailerons constantly and when I didn't get a quick response, I knew I was climbing too fast and nosed down a bit to avoid a stall. We had open cockpits and I could feel the air pressure on my cheeks during slips or skids. We followed the regular station pattern, landing and taking off on each circuit. Our planes had only a five to eight mile speed band; only three to five on climbout. You can imagine why three hours seemed so long. There was a period in each circuit, after you made your first 90-degree turn, when the light barge could be seen and flying to landing was normal. There was no light track visible till you faced the lights.

In September 1918, I was commissioned and, with three other pilots, ordered to London for assignment with the Northern Bombing Station, near Dunkirk in Belgium. After a 10-day delay in New York, reporting each morning for transAtlantic passage, we were booked on one of the best liners, *Magantic*.

*Magantic* sailed in a convoy of 18 ships with a cruiser and two destroyers for protection. It was a luxury cruise trip that, because of the zigzag course, took twice the usual time. We landed in Liverpool and took a train to London where we spent four days in a British officers club, reporting each day for orders. We were told that the plane deliveries had been delayed and we were given orders to Paris. After one day in Paris, we received orders to Brest. From Brest we went to Moutchic near Bordeaux, the only station teaching dive-bombing techniques. It was November 11, 1918, and at 11 o'clock the bells of Brest announced the Armistice. We headed for Bordeaux but got off at Rennes and decided to go back to Paris. France declared November 12 a national day for celebration (and we hoped we wouldn't be missed). We arrived at Moutchic 24 hours late and were

confined to quarters for a month. But the revel in Paris was worth it.

Regular instruction was discontinued at Moutchic, but we could fly every day by simply requesting a plane. The HS-1 was used for some bombing practice, had a reliable 40-mph speed band and you could throw it about a bit. The practice bomb was a metal sphere about the size of a baseball and about the weight of a can of beer. It exploded in a puff of smoke on impact. The target was towed by a fast boat on the lake, in changing directions and at speeds from 15 to 40 miles per hour. We flew at about 1,500 feet and, when the target appeared, I made a maneuvering run to deliver the bomb, compensating for evasive action of the target in both speed and direction changes. It was the most interesting flying that I had in the Navy, and the most fun. After releasing the bomb, we pulled up sharply and made a flipper-turn, so that we could see the smoke puff and by how far we had missed.

When we came into New York harbor, the Statute of Liberty was a moving sight; most of us were silenced by emotion. As we passed her, four fire boats escorted us into the harbor throwing up fronds of water, and all the ships in the harbor blew their whistles. We docked on December 12.

Our orders took us to the Bay Shore Naval Flight Station on the end of Long Island where we reported in and gave them all the necessary information. Then we were given two weeks leave and transportation home. We all went home for Christmas, then returned to the station. It took two days to bring our service records up to date and to calculate our pay and costs, including back pay and travel expenses home. Then we received the certificate releasing us to inactive duty. I went back to college where I graduated the following June.



# Proud Heritage

An E-2 *Hawkeye*, on static display near the west gate of NAS Miramar, Calif., was dedicated in June. The aircraft was first flown in 1961 and later served as a test bed for the E-2's sophisticated electronic system.

Guest speaker at the ceremony was Vice Admiral Robert P. Coogan, Commander, Naval Air Force, Pacific Fleet.

Miramar, long known as the home of the Navy's Pacific Fleet fighter squadrons, also is the home of the Pacific Fleet's carrier airborne early warning squadrons.

The air station became host for West Coast E-2 units in July 1975 when one training and six operational squadrons relocated there from NAS North Island. The move was in keeping with the interdependent roles that fighter aircraft and E-2s play in protecting naval surface forces. Both the fighter and early warning squadrons operate under Commander, Fighter Airborne Early Warning Wing, Pacific Fleet, Rear Admiral Paul T. Gillcrist, whose headquarters is located at the station.

The *Hawkeye*, a five-place, twin turboprop capable of operating from the shore and from carriers is 56 feet long, has an 81-foot wing span and weighs 51,000 pounds when operationally loaded. Its most distinguishable characteristics are a 24-foot diameter, dish-shaped rotodome mounted six feet above the fuselage and four vertical stabilizers. The rotodome contains the high-powered search radar and IFF antennas.

The aircraft is divided into four compartments: cockpit, forward equipment, combat information center and aft equipment.

The E-2's airborne tactical data system (ATDS) includes a long-range, million-watt radar, IFF equipment, data processing and display and an in-flight performance monitor. The integrated system, when coupled with a skilled five-man crew, becomes a complete airborne CIC capable of controlling an entire carrier-launched strike —

under all weather conditions, day or night.

Carrier airborne early warning squadrons originated in the waning days of WW II. The massive Japanese kamikaze attacks broke through fleet defenses by flying at altitudes below the radar horizon of shipboard radars. To test the feasibility of carrier-based aircraft equipped with early warning radar, the Navy developed the 3W version of the *Avenger*. Post-war fleet tactics utilized the mobility and increased radar detection range of this aircraft in the limited mission of detecting low flying aircraft. This eventually evolved into a broader range of intercept control missions.

The first carrier airborne early warning squadrons were commissioned in 1948: VAW-1 at NAS North Island, Calif., and VAW-2 at NAS Norfolk, Va. They were redesignated VCs 11 and 12, respectively, one month later, and VC-12 moved to NAS Quonset Point, R.I. These first two AEW units furnished detachments to Atlantic and Pacific Fleet carriers while the TBM-3W's successor, the AD-3W *Skyraider*, was being developed. By the time the Korean War began in June 1950, the *Avenger* was being replaced in the fleet by AD-3Ws and later model AD-4Ws. Although North Korean air opposition to the Seventh Fleet was virtually non-existent, the inherent flexibility of the AEW platform became increasingly apparent as ASW, strike, and search and rescue control were added to mission capabilities. The durable *Guppy* remained operational until the late 1960s, the AD-4Ws being superseded by AD-5Ws (EA-1Es) after the Korean War.

In July 1956, VCs 11 and 12 were redesignated VAWs 11 and 12 and continued the detachment concept of VAW deployment. Development of the next generation VAW aircraft, the E-1B *Tracer*, began in 1958. It started to replace the *Guppy* in 1961. The E-1B, based on the Grumman S-2 series, remained operational in the fleet until 1977 with RVAW-111 De-

tachment Four aboard USS *Roosevelt* (CV-42).

The E-2A, the first aircraft specifically tailored to the AEW mission, first flew in 1960. Equipped with the airborne tactical data system, it was introduced to the fleet in early 1964. The E-2A saw initial service in the Vietnam Conflict in 1965 with VAW-11 Detachment Charlie aboard USS *Kitty Hawk* (CVA-63).

On April 20, 1967, the detachment concept was partially scrapped when VAW-11 was decommissioned at North Island and six operational carrier airborne early warning squadrons (VAWs 111 through 116) were born. Additionally, a replacement training squadron, RVAW-110, was created to replace the VAW-111 "home guard." VAW-111 continued to deploy E-1B detachments until it transitioned to the E-2B in 1974. At that time, the remaining Pacific Fleet E-1B detachments came under the cognizance of RVAW-110. On July 1, 1967, a similar evolution began in the Atlantic Fleet structure: VAW-12 was redesignated RVAW-120 at NAS Norfolk (where it had relocated from NAS Quonset Point in 1962), and six operational squadrons (VAWs 121 through 126) were eventually created.

The maiden E-2B deployments in 1970 displayed the value of the new *Hawkeye*'s improved computer system. In 1973 the E-2C made its operational debut with VAW-123 aboard USS *Saratoga* (CVA-60). The following year saw VAW-111 transition from E-1Bs to E-2Bs and the commissioning of VAW-117. The Pacific Fleet VAW community moved from North Island to Miramar in July 1975 and the first E-2C was delivered to a Pacific Fleet VAW in June 1978.

The VAW history of technological development and tactical leadership is an ever expanding challenge. The officers and men of Carrier Airborne Early Warning are proud of their heritage and confident of their future.

Lt. Ed Apperson contributed to this story.

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# LETTERS

## All Great

The scenario between Major Holden, VT-6 (*NA News*, September 1979 "Letters") and the C.O. of VT-27 (April 1979) is reminiscent of a scene between Annie Oakley and Buffalo Bill in the musical *Oklahoma*: "...I can do anything better than you!"

VT-2's musical reply to this is: "No you can't! No you can't! No you can't!"

Perhaps sharing close quarters with us has given VT-6 a sense of potency. We are always glad to set an example, and it is gratifying to see that it is finally rubbing off. It has been lonely here at the top. Judging from a decade of statistics, we find it rather precocious of them to claim the title: World's Greatest Training Squadron.

We at VT-2 are glad to see a rising VT-6. When you're number two (not to be confused with VT-2) you have to work harder before you can get it under control. We realize that a successful attempt to overcome a previous inadequate image is being made. As is often the case with adolescent passage to maturity, this attempt is somewhat perjured by the admission of having to use an aircraft as old as a T-28 *Trojan*.

We welcome our sister squadron's efforts and hope you'll hang in there big Six' cause, after all, we're all the greatest.

Capt. Gregory Johnson, USMC  
VT-2 Natops Officer  
NAS Whiting Field  
Milton, Fla. 32570

## Corrections

*NA News* erred on page 22 of September 1979 "Letters" when we identified VS-31's home base as NAS Norfolk. VS-31 is home-based at NAS Cecil Field, Fla.

VAQ-309 was officially commissioned December 1, 1979, vice February 1 as reported on page 33, July 1979.

## Blue Blasters

I am currently in the process of updating the *Blue Blasters'* squadron

history and would like to contact anyone who was attached to VF-20 from October 15, 1943 to 1950; VF-34 from 1950 to 1956; or VA-34 from 1956 to the present. Write to Public Affairs Officer, VA-34, FPO, N.Y., 09501.

## Test Pilot School

An effort is under way to update the USNTPS alumni records. To ensure your receipt of a reunion/symposium invitation, please send your current address to: Administrative Officer, U.S. Naval Test Pilot School, NATC Patuxent River, Md. 20670.

## Ghosts Wanted

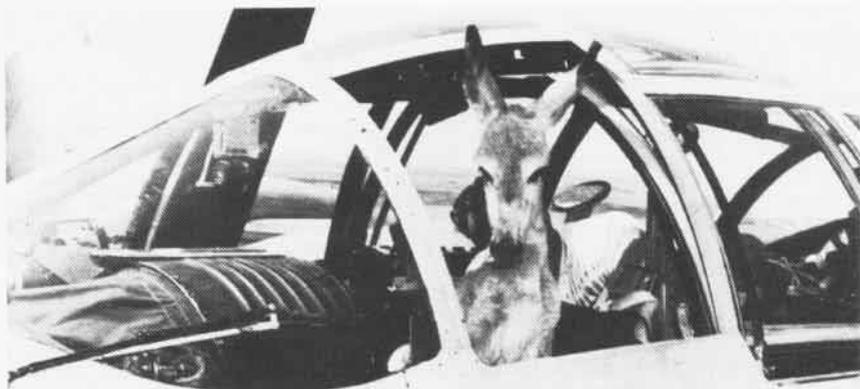
The newly chartered 531 Gray Ghost Squadron of the Marine Corps Aviation Association has formed with headquarters at MCAS Cherry Point. All members and former *Gray Ghosts*

of VMFA-531 are urged to join the nonprofit organization, whose purpose is to perpetuate the continued spirit of comradeship and association with special friends in fostering Marine Corps Aviation. Write the Gray Ghost Squadron, c/o Capt. J. L. Wenrich, Jr., USMC (Ret.), Secretary/Treasurer, 105 Lakeside Drive, Havelock, N.C. 28532.

## Reunions

The fourth annual reunion of USS *Black Hawk* and attached destroyers, 1922-1946, will be held May 16-18, 1980, at the Royal Quality Inn, 4875 North Harbor Drive, San Diego, Calif. 92106. Contact Norman E. Barton, 4628 Lenore Drive, San Diego, Calif. 92115, 714-583-6516.

USS Pittsburgh (CA-72) Association, Pittsburgh, Pa., is organizing a ship's reunion. For details, contact J. C. Ayers, P.O. Box 74, Wildwood, Ga. 30757, 404-820-1601/2360.



## PLANE COMMANDER

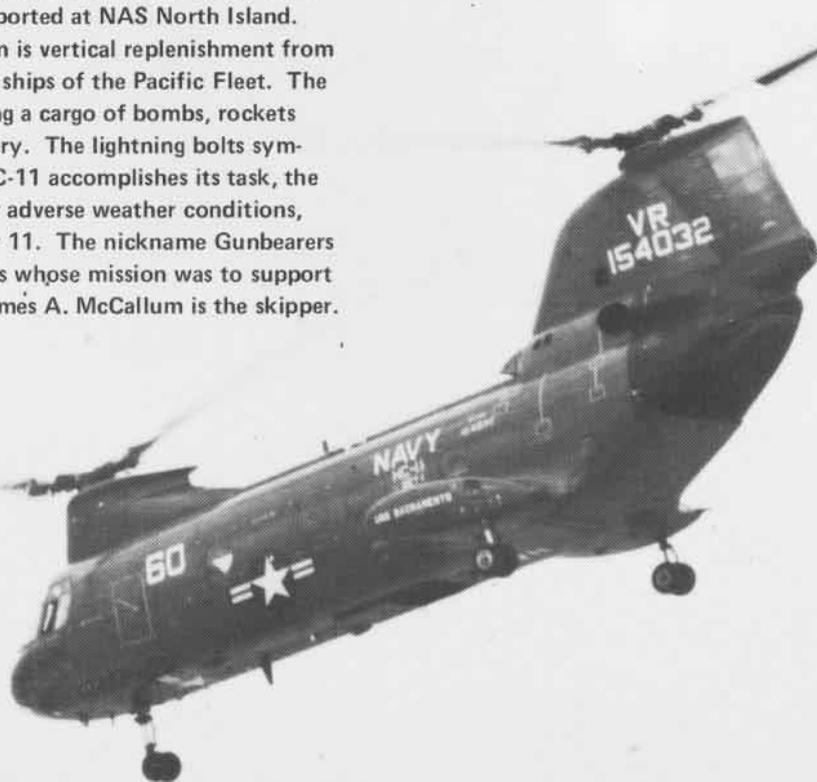
A What in the Cockpit? Naval Aviation enthusiast Sean P. Milligan sent us this photo from his collection. PH1 F. Monk Morgan took the picture, the caption for which, according

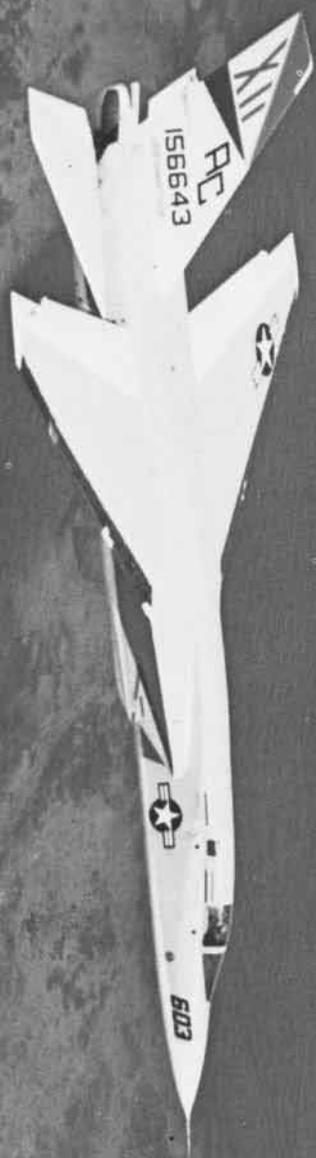
to Milligan, should read: Charlie Ekmek awaiting the rest of the crew of VJ-62 Det Charlie AJ-2P TP-7, BuNo 128053, East Main Field, Eskishir, Turkey, 1956.

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Helicopter Combat Support Squadron 11 was established on October 1, 1977, and is home-ported at NAS North Island. The squadron's primary mission is vertical replenishment from Mobile Logistic Support Force ships of the Pacific Fleet. The insignia features an arm grasping a cargo of bombs, rockets and missiles in the act of delivery. The lightning bolts symbolize the speed with which HC-11 accomplishes its task, the capability to carry it out under adverse weather conditions, and also represent the number 11. The nickname Gunbearers is derived from ancient warriors whose mission was to support front-line musketeers. Cdr. James A. McCallum is the skipper.





NAVAL AVIATION NEWS