



Cdr. Barry Dagnall

CO, HM-14



As a student Naval Aviator, Commander Barry Dagnall got a ride in an H-1 “Huey,” and “I just fell in love with helicopters from that day.” Now, 19 years later, he’s flying the biggest helo in the fleet—the MH-53E *Sea Dragon*—as the commanding officer of Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron 14, NS Norfolk, Va., one of two squadrons specializing in hunting and sweeping sea mines.

His responsibilities as squadron skipper are wide ranging. “My primary job right now is to make sure this squadron is trained and ready to go do its mission for real. Second is preparing the next generation to take over. We have more than 500 people and it’s my responsibility to help them succeed personally, professionally, as a team and as individuals, and that’s a big job. Another facet is to make this a rewarding experience for them so they want to stay in the Navy and continue the tradition. Obviously, we’re always trying to keep good people.”

Dagnall described a recent conversation with a lieutenant trying to decide on his career path, who said he would stay in as long as he was having fun. “I told him that you have to look at the big picture. In the big scheme of things it’s fun, but you make some sacrifices on the family side and sometimes end up in jobs where you’d rather be flying. It can be frustrating but you learn a lot more, and it makes you a better senior officer later on. When you’re done you’re glad you did it, because you’re smarter. Is it worth it? Of course.”



JOI Joshua M. Hudson

AO2 Gregg Spickel

HC-8



When AO2 Gregg Spickel joined the Navy in 1990, he became a rescue swimmer almost by chance. "When I chose the helo path, they asked if search and rescue (SAR) was what I wanted to do. At the time I didn't know what it was, but now I love my job." As the SAR petty officer for Helicopter Combat Support Squadron 8, NS Norfolk, Va., he trains the other rescue swimmers, and manages the night vision goggle and aerial gunner programs.

As part of a SAR detachment aboard *Kearsarge* (LHD 3) "we assisted the Marines in evacuating people from Sierra Leone, Africa. It was pretty exciting; we were constantly flying and bringing civilians aboard the ship, a lot of whom didn't speak English. They were actually sleeping in our racks, and eventually the crew was all sleeping out in the helicopters or in the gym. For three days they lived on board with us until we flew them to a safer area."

Spickel recognizes the opportunities he has had in the last nine years with the Navy, and looks forward to earning a commission and college degree. The aviation ordnanceman commented, "I'm 27 years old and I'm in charge of 33 people. That's a pretty big responsibility, more than any other 27-year-old might have. It's helped me grow up a little bit more."

Photos by JO1 Joshua M. Hudson



Lt. Molly Boron

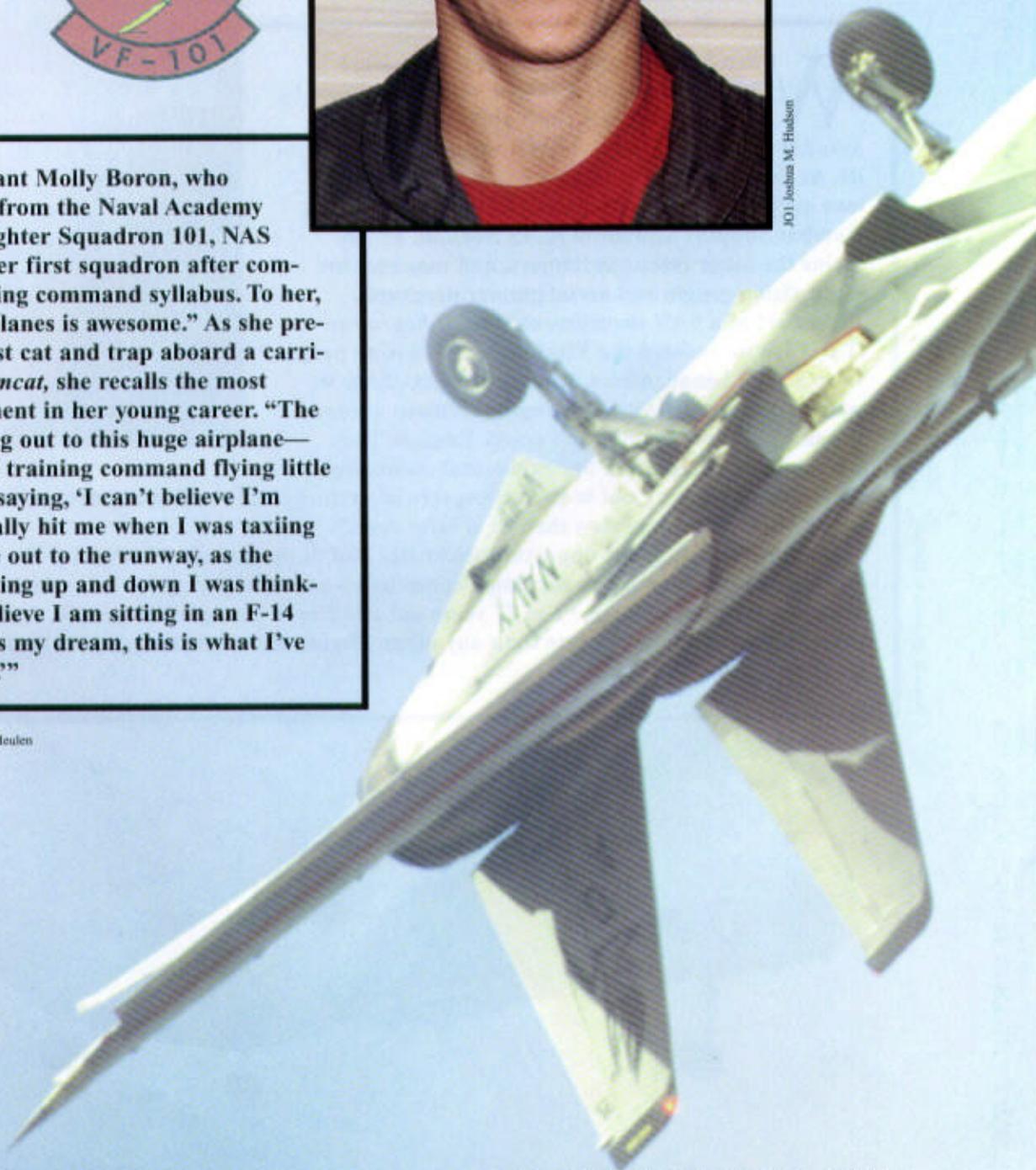
VF-101



101 Joshua M. Hudson

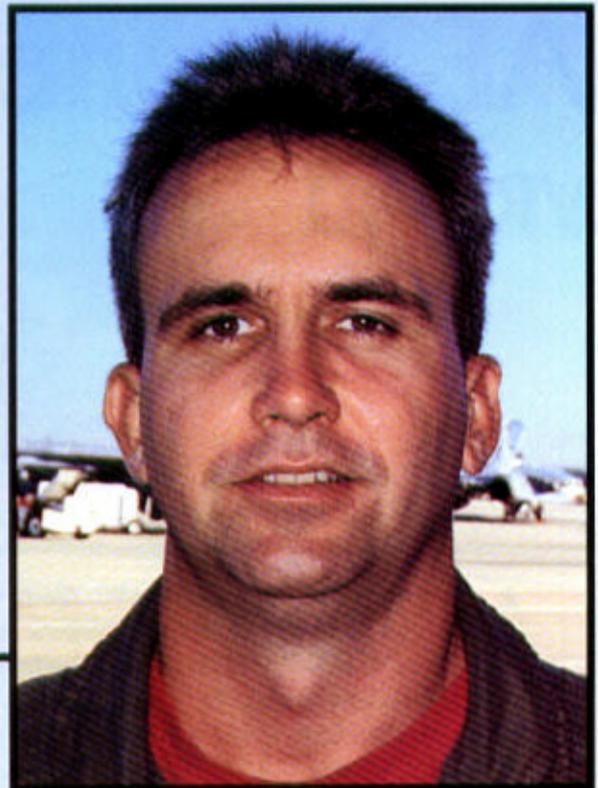
For Lieutenant Molly Boron, who graduated from the Naval Academy in 1995, Fighter Squadron 101, NAS Oceana, Va., is her first squadron after completing the training command syllabus. To her, “flying gray airplanes is awesome.” As she prepares for her first cat and trap aboard a carrier in an F-14 *Tomcat*, she recalls the most memorable moment in her young career. “The first time walking out to this huge airplane—coming from the training command flying little tiny jets—I was saying, ‘I can’t believe I’m doing this.’ It really hit me when I was taxiing for the first time out to the runway, as the plane was bouncing up and down I was thinking, ‘I cannot believe I am sitting in an F-14 right now. This is my dream, this is what I’ve been waiting for.’”

F-14 photo © Richard Vander Meulen



Lt. Glenn Hanson

VF-101



101 Joshua M. Hudson

Lieutenant Glenn Hanson wanted to fly since he was 10 years old, and that desire was realized when he joined the Navy in 1990. An instructor pilot with Fighter Squadron 101, NAS Oceana, Va., the F-14 *Tomcat* fleet readiness squadron, he explained, "My job here is to teach the aircrew how to land the F-14 on the ship. As the carrier qualifications phase leader, I get them worked up over a five-week period and send them out to the ship."

The end result of the instructor's effort is highly visible. "It's rewarding because when you go to other fleet squadrons you see exactly the product that we're putting out. We train radar intercept officers (RIOs) and we get to see them progress from not knowing how to talk on the radio to graduating out of the squadron and being able to run the radar and everything else a fleet RIO does. We watch pilots come through who have never flown the F-14 go from not being able to land this thing very well to landing on the flight deck of a carrier, and doing it well on a regular basis."

He quipped, "It's the best job that I can think of, other than maybe being a professional baseball player."



AE2 Trone Gibbs

VRC-40



JO1 Joshua M. Trudsen

After two years of college, AE2 Trone Gibbs joined the Navy in 1995 to become an aviation electrician's mate. Along with technical instruction, he received training in "responsibility, accountability and discipline—which I needed."

Promoted from E-2 to E-5 in three years, Gibbs, currently assigned to Fleet Logistics Support Squadron 40, NS Norfolk, Va., has learned the value of leading by example. "When I came in I had a shipmate who had just come from captain's mast—you know, 'I don't care about this, I don't care about that,' etc. That's the type of person a lot of people shunned, gave him the dirty jobs. But that's the type of person that I want to get a personal relationship with to let them know, 'Hey, you fell down, you got a little dirt on your face, wipe it off and let's keep going.' That person is now a second class, three Navy Achievement Medals, up for the fourth one, dual qualified and a supervisor. It's unreal, I feel personal accomplishment knowing that I helped this individual get to where he is today."

"The experience that the Navy has given me blows my mind. People trust you to fix these airplanes. You've got people's lives at stake. You just can't get that everywhere. Every day that you come to work it's a challenge."

AOI Rodger Withrow

VF-31



JOI Joshua M. Hudson

For AOI Rodger Withrow, an aviation ordnance-man with Fighter Squadron 31, NAS Oceana, Va., joining the Navy in 1981 after being laid off from his job was a good decision. At the age of 17, "I needed to be challenged, and the Navy did that for me."

Although he wanted to fly when he first joined, he was not able to realize that dream until he reached second class and became an aircrewman. His career produced one particularly memorable moment. "When I was an aircrewman with Patrol Squadron 23 we were prosecuting a Soviet submarine when the USSR fell. The sub surfaced and we established radio contact. It was like we actually were there for the end of the cold war."

The Navy "has really helped me personally and professionally. You earn pride in what you're doing, some ownership in the military and the knowledge that you're part of a family. There's no job that's going to be 100-percent satisfying every day, but there have been a lot more 100-percent days than 50-percent days. It has exceeded every expectation."

F-14 photo by Ted Carlson



Capt. Lindell Rutherford

CO, George Washington



Captain Lindell G. Rutherford, commanding officer of *George Washington* (CVN 73), was commissioned in the Navy after graduating from the University of Missouri in 1972. During his career he has been the skipper of the *Ghostriders* of Fighter Squadron (VF) 142 and has flown the A-4 *Skyhawk*, F-4 *Phantom* and F-14 *Tomcat*.

"I went through the student union one day and there was a lieutenant (jg) showing films of Navy aircraft landing and taking off of aircraft carriers," the captain recounted, "and it looked like a lot of fun. It was just a spur of the moment association."

When Rutherford reported to his first squadron, VF-111 deployed on *Franklin D. Roosevelt* (CV 42), he did not have an overpowering drive to become a carrier or squadron CO. He was just happy to be flying. Those objectives

evolved with the increased responsibility of promotion as he developed goals for the next level.

With the future CVX carriers, advanced catapult designs and the new joint strike fighter on the horizon, Capt. Rutherford sees a bright future for Naval Aviation. However, he cannot predict where the Naval Aviation will be in the next hundred years. "I read a letter by then-Secretary of the Navy Theodore Roosevelt when I was the executive officer of *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 72). He had heard rumors about the invention of the airplane and thought that the Navy should send some engineers to study this new machine, because it sounded like it would have some military benefit. He had the vision to see the importance of Naval Aviation, but I don't think he could have foreseen the critical role it plays today."

Rutherford noted that the Navy is fast approaching a period where we share information on a real-time basis. Network centric warfare is the focus for the new millennium: getting the right information to the right person operating the equipment at the right time. New technology will require highly trained Sailors.

"Without question, the biggest thing I've learned is the value of people," he emphasized. "You really can't accomplish anything as an individual in this business. If you want success, the focus has to be on people. If I could change one thing about the Navy it would be to increase our manning."

Ltjg. Derek Adametz

Soaring anywhere from 200 to 2,000 feet above the ocean at 300 knots, Lieutenant (jg) Derek Adametz never gets bored flying.

Commissioned in May 1996, his first assignment as a pilot was to fly the P-3C *Orion* with VP-45, NAS Jacksonville, Fla. Working with the crew to perform surface surveillance and antidrug operations, Adametz recalls each flight as a memorable experience.

The original role of antisubmarine warfare has diminished and is not the focus it was during the cold war, Adametz observed. Today, the P-3C *Orion* is being revamped to take on the missions of the new millennium.

Another change Adametz sees is increased efficiency. As a pilot, he said he would like to see less time spent waiting and more time training. "Maintenance has always been a challenge in aviation, and that's understandable, but sometimes it feels like we are losing flight hours. That seems to be changing, though, as better maintenance procedures mean less down time



without putting more work on individuals."

One thing Adametz wouldn't change, however, is the level of morale. "From my experience, morale has always been really good. I've met a lot of great people who seem to be happy with where they are going and what they are doing in the Navy."

Temporarily assigned to the Naval Historical Center, Washington, D.C., Adametz is planning to attend the Naval Postgraduate School and then return to Jacksonville to fly. "I can't wait to get in the air again; I have a great time every time I go up. As long as I'm having this much fun, when my commitment is up, I plan on staying in."

To the professionals of Naval Aviation: As the preceding interviews demonstrate, the future is in good hands. With every mission flown and every turn of a maintainer's wrench, you ensure the safety of your shipmates, your family and your country. We offer heartfelt gratitude for your dedication and sacrifice.