

DOWNED PILOT RESCUED ON FIRST MISSION – Forced to bail out of his crippled Crusader after flying into heavy anti-aircraft fire on his first combat mission over North Vietnam, Lieutenant (j.g.) Craig Taylor was rescued by a "Big Mother" helicopter after about 30 minutes in the water less than a mile off the enemy coast.

The 24-year-old fighter pilot was making his initial flight with the "Sundowners" of VF-111, led by Commander Bob Rasmussen and operating from the USS Oriskany in the Gulf of Tonkin. (Photo shows one of the squadron's planes aboard the carrier.)



Lieutenant Taylor, a 1965 graduate of the U. S. Naval Academy, had completed fighter training in December. Three weeks before he parachuted from his plane January 2, he had said goodbye to his wife, the former Fran Haire, of Silver Springs, Maryland, and their three-week-old baby.

The F-8 pilot was escorting a photo reconnaissance plane in the Thanh Hoa area when he encountered the ground fire. "I could see dozens of muzzle bursts from anti-aircraft sites below," he reported. "and all of a sudden I noticed that my electrical power was gone. I was losing airspeed and literally falling out of the sky."

Heading for the coast, seven miles away, he called for help on his emergency radio and began hoping his disabled Crusader could reach the relative safety of Tonkin Gulf. "It took me only minutes to reach the water, but those were the longest minutes of my life," he said. "I was down to a very low altitude, with slow airspeed, and I just wasn't sure I could make it."

Relief was replaced by anxiety when he saw a fleet of North Vietnamese fishing boats close to the coast. "I just couldn't avoid them – the plane wouldn't fly any farther. After I ejected, I saw it plunge into the middle of the fleet but it didn't hit any of the junks. It crashed in shallow water with its tail section sticking up above the surface."

A-4 Skyhawks were already circling overhead when Lieutenant Taylor hit the water. "When I surfaced," he said, "the junks were heading away from me. They've learned not to stick around a downed pilot when the Skyhawks are overhead." The rescue helicopter soon arrived on the scene and plucked him out of the gulf. "It was almost like a dream," he said. "When I got up in the helo, I felt a fantastic emotion that just isn't describable."

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FIGHTER REPORT

2,000-HOUR AWARD MADE ABOARD ORISKANY – Lieutenant Commander "Pete" Peters, of VF-111, was busy fighting a war when awards to pilots who had logged 2,000 hours in Crusader cockpits were made last October during the 11th Tailhook Reunion in Las Vegas, Nevada.

His 2,000-hour plaque finally caught up with him in December, when the presentation was made by his commanding officer, Commander Bob Rasmussen (right), aboard the USS Oriskany on Yankee Station in the Gulf of Tonkin.



"HUNTERS" BACK IN ACTION – Crusader and Skyhawk pilots from the USS Oriskany returned to combat over North Vietnam on January 2, following the New Year's cease fire, and used missiles, bombs, and cannon fire to destroy the engine and seven boxcars of a 50-car freight train heading south toward Thanh Hoa.

The locomotive's boilers exploded after Commander C. A. L. Swanson, skipper of the "Hunters" of VF-162, scored a direct hit with an air-to-ground missile.

"Hunters" in action during December included Lieutenant (j.g.) William C. Moody, who, flying his first mission over North Vietnam and "shot at" for the first time, teamed up with his flight leader to destroy four supply trucks with their 500-pound bombs.

"We spotted four trucks about three miles southwest of Vinh," Lieutenant Moody said. "They must have seen us because two of them cut into a rocky area and the other two pulled into a garage-like storage building. We started to pick up flak as we rolled in on the trucks. It was the first time I'd ever been shot at. Lieutenant Commander (Stuart E.) Harrison's bombs got the trucks hiding in the storage building and I bombed the other two. Then he came back and hit them again, setting off a secondary explosion."

Pilots of VF-162, which is making its third combat cruise aboard the Oriskany, have dropped more than 1,500,000 pounds of bombs on targets in North Vietnam since July 14. Major strikes have included four against the Phuc Yen air base 18 miles north of downtown Hanoi and one against the thermal power plant in the capital city.

Reporting on support of A-4s of Carrier Air Wing 16 during the power plant attack, Lieutenant Commander James P. O'Neill said: "We were scheduled as flak suppressors that morning. As soon as we pointed our noses toward 'downtown', we received a volley of SAMs."

The Crusader pilots reached the target area despite "several close calls" caused by the surface-to-air missiles. "We picked out several large caliber flak sites and put our 500-pounders right down their throats," said Lieutenant (j.g.) Ron R. Coalson. "We pulled off target and set up an orbit to cover the A-4s, hoping to see a MIG or two. But, unfortunately, they didn't come out to play."

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LT. COL. PEARD TRANSFERS FROM F-8 DESIGN DESK – After almost 32 months on the job, Lieutenant Colonel Roger W. Peard, USMC, transfers February 6 from the Fighter Design Office of Naval Air Systems Command Headquarters to eventual duty with WestPac Marine Aviation Forces. He will be relieved by Lieutenant Colonel Clifford A. Lindell, USMC.

Lieutenant Colonel Peard will be on temporary duty at HQMC for two months in connection with selection board duties and will then report for F-4 Phantom refresher training with the Second Marine Air Wing at MCAS Cherry Point, North Carolina.

His logbooks show more than 4,200 hours in military airplanes, including 2,535 hours in jets and 870 hours in F-8/RF-8 aircraft (all versions except drone controllers).



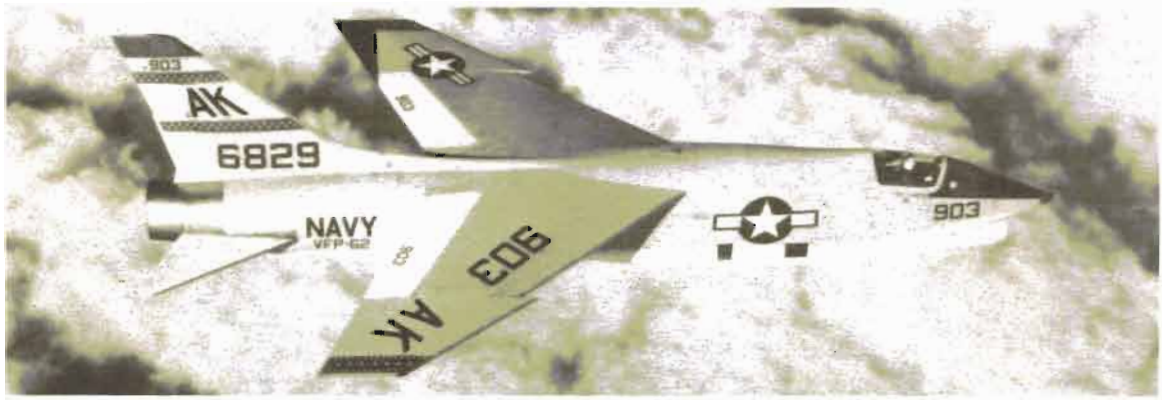
His military career began in 1944, when he joined the Navy for the V-12 program. He entered the U. S. Naval Academy in 1945 after attending the Navy Preparatory School at Bainbridge. Active in athletics at Annapolis, he was selected for the All-America Soccer Team as a half-back in 1947 and 1948. Commissioned a second lieutenant in 1949, he attended school at Quantico and later participated in the Inchon-Seoul campaign in Korea as a rifle platoon commander with the 5th Marine Regiment. He reported for flight training in 1951 as a first lieutenant.

Training in SNJ, F8F, F6F, SNB and T-33 aircraft led to his assignment to the AU-1 Corsairs of VMA-225 at Edenton, North Carolina. Promoted to captain, he was a "plank owner" with MAG-11 at Atsugi, Japan in 1953, flying F9F-5 Panthers with VMF-314. Ordered to flight instructor duty, he served in SNJs in primary at North Whiting Field and in F9F-2s in advanced training at Sherman Field.

After a tour at MCRD San Diego as a recruit company commander, he attended Aviation Safety School in 1958 and, as a major, reported to VMF-323 and flew F8U-1s with MAG-33 at El Toro. Transferred to VMCJ-3 and then to VMCJ-1 in Japan, in F8U-1P and F3D-2Q aircraft, he returned from overseas to serve as personnel officer for MAG-32, Beaufort, South Carolina in 1962. Completing Test Pilot School at Patuxent River, Maryland in Class 34, he reported to the Weapons System Test Division, where he was the ordnance branch head and flew the F-8, F-4, A-4, A-1, OV-1 and C-131 (plus many other models with co-pilot space). His assignment to NASC headquarters as a lieutenant colonel took place in June 1965.



VF-13, VF-62 ON DUTY IN MEDITERRANEAN – Crusader squadrons VF-13 and VF-62 and VFP-62 detachment 38 are serving aboard the USS Shangri La in the Mediterranean area.



VFP-62 DECOMMISSIONED AT CECIL FIELD – The last chapter of a proud history has been written by Light Photographic Squadron 62, decommissioned at NAS Cecil Field, Florida after 19 years of service around the globe and operations from the flight decks of 22 aircraft carriers.

The squadron's mission of providing aerial photographic reconnaissance in support of operations of the Atlantic Fleet was assumed January 5 by VFP-63, based at NAS Miramar, California. The last of more than 100 detachments sent out by VFP-62 to attack carriers deploying to the Atlantic, the Mediterranean and the Western Pacific were Detachments 38 and 42, assigned, respectively, to the USS Shangri La and the USS Franklin D. Roosevelt, operating in the Mediterranean with the Sixth Fleet.

VFP-62's last commanding officer was Commander M. L. Hayes (photo), who relieved Commander N. L. Youngblood, Jr. in August 1967. Commander Hayes will report as chief staff officer, Commander Seventh Fleet, Detachment Charlie, in Saigon.



The squadron's finest hours came in 1962, when pilots swept over Cuba in their Crusaders and took many of the low-level photos of the Russian missile site build-up on which President John F. Kennedy based his decision for a showdown with the Kremlin.

For its integral role in the events leading up to the confrontation, VFP-62 received the first Navy Unit Commendation ever awarded in peacetime and the first to be presented personally by the President of the United States. Sixteen pilots were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for "extraordinary achievement in aerial flight."

The unit commendation citation read: "For extraordinary achievement in the planning and execution of aerial reconnaissance during 1962 on missions in support of operations of the utmost importance to the security of the United States. The successful completion of these flights in the face of adverse circumstances was in keeping with the highest traditions of the U. S. Naval Service."

President Kennedy made the presentation during a tour of the military buildup bases in Florida and told the units and men involved in the photo reconnaissance operation: "Your work has contributed as much to the security of the United States as any unit in our history and any group of men in our history."

VF-111 PILOT DOWNS MIG ON 111TH MISSION - Maneuvering into position on the tail of a MIG-21 during an aerial battle over the southern panhandle region of North Vietnam, Lieutenant Anthony J. Nargi, of Fighter Squadron 111, Detachment 11, blasted the enemy fighter out of the sky with a Sidewinder air-to-air missile.

The "Sundowners" pilot scored the Navy's 29th MIG kill during the air war over Vietnam and the 17th credited to pilots of Crusader squadrons in combat reports released for publication.

Back aboard USS Intrepid in the Gulf of Tonkin (photo), Lieutenant Nargi was greeted by the carrier's commanding officer, Captain Vincent F. Kelley.



"I'm happy that all my years of training and flying have paid off," he said. "This was my 111th mission and I got my first MIG and the first ever downed by my squadron, Fighter Squadron 111."

Lieutenant Nargi and his wingman, Lieutenant (j.g.) Alexander C. Rucker, were on an intercept mission September 19 when he spotted a MIG-21.

"I think the MIG pilot saw me about the same time," he reported. "I called 'MIG-21 high' to my wingman. The MIG pilot started taking evasive maneuvers immediately. He climbed and went into a loop and I was able to get into position behind him."

Lieutenant Nargi's Sidewinder "tracked perfectly," he said. "It flew right up the tailpipe of the MIG and blew the whole tail end of the airplane off, creating a large red fireball. The pilot ejected and I saw his orange and white chute open."

The two F-8C pilots then engaged a second MIG sighted by Lieutenant Rucker. "I immediately called Lieutenant Nargi to break and then I broke myself," he said. "The MIG came right by and below us, Lieutenant Nargi came up behind the MIG and we were both in pretty good position."

Both Crusader pilots fired Sidewinders which exploded close to the enemy plane but apparently caused no major damage and the MIG pilot headed north to escape pursuit by the "Sundowners" and F-8 pilots from USS Hancock who also had responded to the intercept order.

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**FIGHTER
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"DUSTY" RHODES LEADS VF-111 DETACHMENT – Lieutenant Commander W. K. "Dusty" Rhodes is officer in charge of VF-111, Detachment 11, flying from USS Intrepid on Yankee Station in the Gulf of Tonkin.

Lieutenant Commander Rhodes (at left in photo with Lieutenant Anthony J. Nargi, who scored a MIG kill September 19) leads the detachment's pilots in their mission of providing fighter cover for the attack squadrons of Carrier Air Wing 10 and photo escort for the VFP-63 detachment aboard the carrier.



Commander Jack L. Finney is the commanding officer of VF-111, based at NAS Miramar, California.



"CRUSADER COLLEGE" COMMAND CHANGES – Commander Harry J. Post has assumed command of VF-124 at NAS Miramar, relieving Commander Robert S. Chew, Jr.



Commander Chew has been assigned to duty as executive officer of USS America.

Commander Post (left in photo) had served as air operations officer aboard USS Saratoga since July 1967 prior to reporting at "Crusader College." His Navy career also has included service in the Bureau of Naval Personnel and duty with Fighter Squadrons 174 and 103, with Cruiser-Destroyer Flotilla Nine Staff, and as commanding officer of Fighter Squadron 24.

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NEW SKIPPER HEADS "CHECKMATES" - In a change of command ceremony aboard USS Hancock, Commander Robert A. Van Arsdol relieved Commander Ralph B. Rutherford as commanding officer of Fighter Squadron 211.



Commander Rutherford has been ordered to duty with the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. Commander Van Arsdol (left in photo) joined the "Checkmates" as executive officer in January 1968.

The other Crusader squadron operating off the coast of Vietnam from USS Hancock, commanded by Captain Howard Greer, is VF-24, led by Commander Marion H. "Red" Isaacks.

CNO HONORS PILOT - Receiving recognition for his accomplishment in logging 2,000 hours in Crusader cockpits, Lieutenant J. L. Unruh, of VF-124, achieved added distinction when his 2,000-hour plaque was presented by the Chief of Naval Operations.

Admiral Thomas H. Moorer made the presentation and congratulated Lieutenant Unruh during the 12th annual Tailhook Reunion in Las Vegas last month.



"WELL DONE!" - A "well done!" from their commanding officer was in order for two VF-124 pilots who had won recognition for recording 2,000 Crusader flight hours.

Commander Harry J. Post (center in photo) extended congratulations at NAS Miramar to Commander E. J. Hickey, Jr. (left), and Lieutenant J. L. Unruh. Commander Hickey, preparing for a new duty assignment with VF-62, based at NAS Cecil Field, Florida, was unable to be present when 2,000-hour plaques were formally awarded earlier last month at the Tailhook Reunion in Las Vegas.



VF-162 PILOTS FLYING F-8J - F-8J remanufactured Crusaders are being flown by the "Hunters" of VF-162, based at NAS Miramar.

The first of the squadron's F-8Js was delivered from Dallas to "Fightertown" by Commander J. A. Muka (photo), executive officer.

VF-162, led by Commander Robert F. Aumack, is scheduled to be the first fleet squadron to take F-8Js aboard a carrier for qualification operations.

"BONNIE DICK" PILOTS BACK FROM COMBAT - Returning from a seven-month combat deployment aboard USS Bon Homme Richard, Crusader pilots of VF-51, VF-53 and VFP-63, Detachment 31, flew into NAS Miramar on October 9.

The first group of Crusaders to fly in from the carrier was led by Commander Albert A. Schaufelberger, commanding officer of Carrier Air Wing 5. The second group was led by Commander John M. Altmeyer, skipper of the "Screaming Eagles" of VF-51, and Commander Harry R. Blake, skipper of the "Iron Angels" of VF-53. Lieutenant Commander J. N. "Red Baron" Schulze led the VFP-63 detachment as officer in charge.

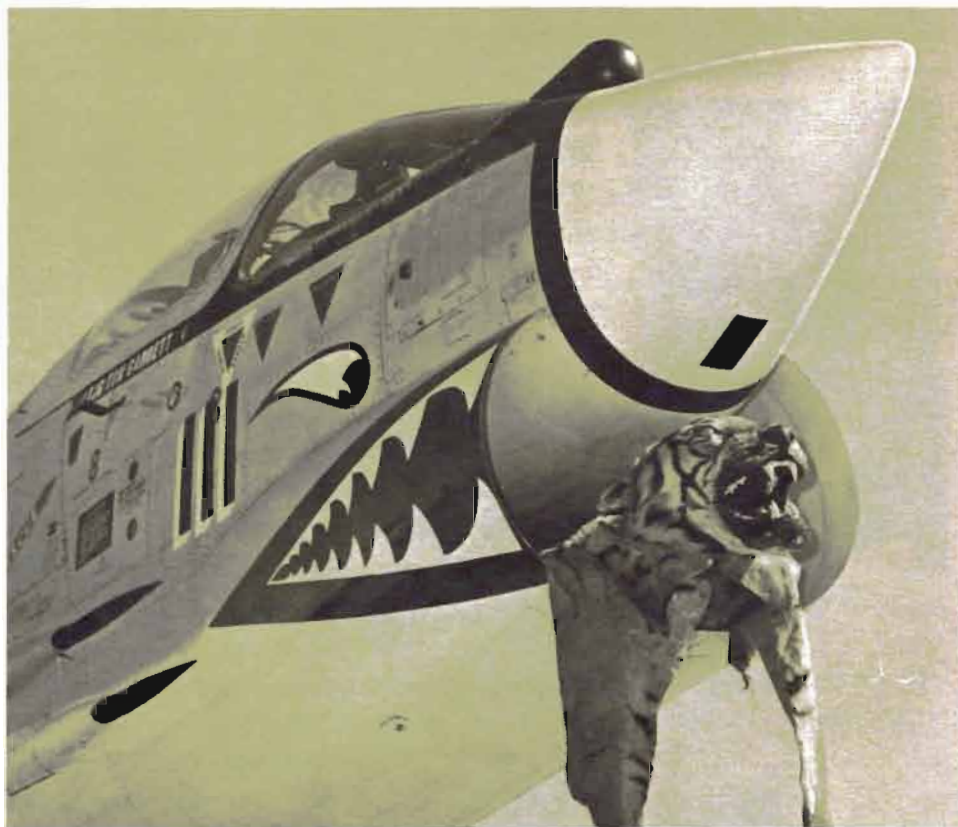
CAPTAIN CRAVEN COMMANDS RCVW-12 - Captain Phillip R. Craven relieved Captain Robert E. Gallatin as Commander, Readiness Attack Carrier Air Wing 12 in a ceremony October 11 at NAS Miramar.

Captain Gallatin has been assigned to duty as commanding officer of the attack transport USS Okanogan. Captain Craven previously commanded Air Wing 19, recently returned from Vietnam combat duty aboard USS Ticonderoga. VF-191, VF-194 and VFP-63, Detachment 14, served with the air wing.

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FIGHTER REPORT



TIGER IN THE TANK? – No words are necessary to explain this photo as far as the F-8 Crusader pilots of VF-111 and the F-4 Phantom pilots of VF-121 at NAS Miramar, California, are concerned. Other readers, aware of the intense rivalry among fighter squadrons and particularly those flying different types of aircraft, may find it helpful to know that the tiger skin "mascot" of VF-121 disappeared from its squadron habitat. And, somehow, a photographer just happened to be on hand when it was seemingly about to be devoured in the jet air scoop of one of the shark-nosed Crusaders flown by the "Sundowners" of VF-111.



VF-124 WINS SAFETY AWARD – When the 1968 Chief of Naval Operations Safety Award was won by VF-124, NAS Miramar, congratulations were passed on by Commander Harry J. Post

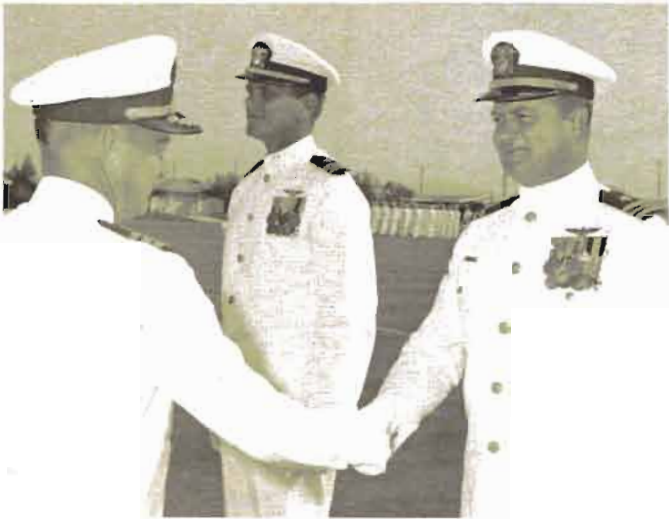
(right in photo), commanding officer. Left to right: Chief L. F. Trope, maintenance leading chief; Lieutenant Commander R. L. Mudgett, safety officer; Commander E. J. Hickey, maintenance officer.



VFP-63 PILOTS DECORATED – Decorations for service in the air war over Vietnam have been awarded to Lieutenant Commander James W. Rosson, Officer in Charge of VFP-63's Detachment 43 during operations from USS Coral Sea, and Lieutenant Commander John R. Nork, Jr., Officer in Charge of Detachment 14 during operations from USS Ticonderoga.

Lieutenant Commander Rosson received an individual action Air Medal award to add to strike/flight Air Medal awards received previously. Both officers received the Navy Commendation Medal.

The presentations were made at NAS Miramar by Commander James L. Ellis, commanding officer of the Crusader photo squadron.



Lieutenant Commander Rosson's Air Medal award was for action February 13, 1968, when he "led a two-plane photo reconnaissance flight into two separate highly defended target areas of North Vietnam."

The citation noted that "he obtained outstanding photographic coverage of all assigned strategic targets during his extended flight over enemy territory while exposed to heavy anti-aircraft fire."

In the process of updating current intelligence, a planned major ALPHA strike was determined to be unnecessary, saving immeasurable time, effort and possibly lives."

The Navy Commendation Medal awarded to Lieutenant Commander Rosson was for "meritorious service" as Officer in Charge of the VFP-63 detachment serving with Carrier Air Wing 15 aboard USS Coral Sea from October 2, 1967, to February 20, 1968. The citation stated that he assumed command "following the combat loss of his predecessor" and also "completed numerous vital unarmed photo reconnaissance missions on major targets in Vietnam such as Haiphong, Hai Duong, Vinh, Nam Dinh, and Ninh Binh."

Lieutenant Commander Nork received the Navy Commendation Medal for "meritorious service" as Officer in Charge of the VFP-63 detachment aboard USS Ticonderoga from January 26 to July 24, 1968.



"Under his direction," the citation read, "his detachment provided a continuous flow of tactical photo intelligence to strike planning and air intelligence centers. Due to this precise assistance, numerous lucrative targets were discovered, thus substantially contributing to the mission completion of his detachment, Carrier Air Wing 19, and Ticonderoga."

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NEW NAVY F-8 MANAGER ASSUMES POST – Duties as F-8 Project Manager, Naval Air Systems Command Headquarters, have been assumed by Captain William N. Donnelly, who had served previously as executive officer of USS Constellation.

Captain Donnelly (photo) relieved Captain George W. Ellis, assigned to duty as commanding officer of USS Arcturus after serving as project manager since December 1966.



The 25-year span of Captain Donnelly's Navy career includes service with Bombing Squadron 81, Attack Squadron 94 and Composite Squadron 4. Subsequently, he attended Aviation Electronics Officers' School and then served at the Naval Air Technical Training Center, Memphis. After duty as electronics officer for the Naval Air Reserve Training Unit, Miami, he attended Combat Information Center School and served as assistant CIC officer aboard USS Hornet.

Following tours of duty with All Weather Fighter Squadron 3 and with the Bureau of Naval Weapons, he became executive officer of Fighter Squadron 154 and later served as commanding officer of the squadron, flying Crusaders from USS Coral Sea. Subsequent service on the staff of Commander Naval Air Forces, Pacific was followed by duty aboard USS Constellation.



CRUSADER RESERVE SQUADRONS DEACTIVATED – Three "weekend warrior" F-8 Reserve squadrons called up in January as a result of the Pueblo crisis have been released from active duty and returned to their home bases.

VF-703, led by Commander Frank Liberato, returned to NAS Dallas from NAS Miramar. VF-661, led by Commander Lemuel O. Warfield, and VF-931, led by Commander Robert T. Hogan, returned from NAS Cecil Field, Florida, to their respective bases at the Naval Air Facility, Andrews AFB, Washington, and at NAS Willow Grove, Pennsylvania.



The Lone Star State flag which identified VF-703's ready room at Miramar came back to Texas with embellishments. As displayed in photo by Commander Liberato (right) and Lieutenant Commander P. J. Smith, it now incorporates the insignia patches of the Pacific Fleet F-8 squadrons based at "Fightertown."

VC-2 PROVIDES JET SERVICES - Pilots of VC-2 and their blue-tailed Crusaders, based at NAS Oceana, Virginia, provide jet aircraft services for units of the Atlantic Fleet in the Virginia Capes and Narragansett Bay operating areas.

The squadron command changed November 8 when Commander Walter C. "Chuck" Larry (left photo) relieved Commander Ronald N. Andresen (right photo).

Commander Andresen has been ordered to duty as weapons officer of USS Independence. Commander Larry served as VC-2's executive officer prior to assuming duty as the squadron's skipper.



FLECOMPRON 2 became the first supersonic utility squadron on the East Coast when it received its first Crusaders in July, 1961. Services currently provided include air intercept flights for controller training, tow target flights for Fleet gunnery exercises and Fleet squadron Sidewinder and Sparrow missile shoots, radar tracking and navigational air check flights, and simulated attacks for calibration and capability determination of shipboard fire control systems.

The squadron provided radar and communication calibration flights for USS New Jersey, only operational battleship in the world, and radar and communication checks for USS John F. Kennedy, the Navy's newest aircraft carrier.

VC-2's secondary mission is to conduct combat readiness training in F-8 aircraft for assigned Naval aviators. Training designed to provide experience and proficiency in using the Crusader as a weapons system includes low level navigation, air-to-air gunnery, air-to-ground gunnery, Sidewinder firing, radar-controlled intercepts, broadcast control intercepts, in-flight refueling and air combat maneuvering.

During fiscal 1968, squadron pilots flew 1,996 sorties for a total of 3,240 accident-free F-8 hours.



"FOUR C" SOCIETY FORMING - Plans are under way for formation of an exclusive "Four C" Society limited to pilots who have flown all of four "C" aircraft--the piston-engine F4U Corsair and the jet-engine F7U Cutlass, F-8 Crusader and A-7 Corsair II.

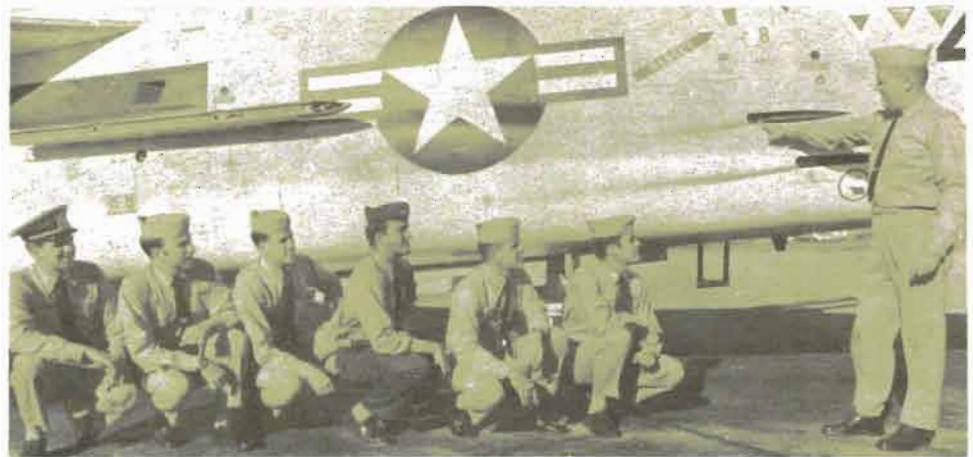
Compilation of a charter honor roll is the necessary starting point in preparation for suitable recognition of individual accomplishment and distinction. Officers whose logbooks qualify them for inclusion on the select membership roster are requested to forward their names and mailing addresses to L. B. Richardson, Jr., Vice President, Vought Aeronautics Division, LTV Aerospace Corporation, Dallas, Texas 75222.

As the organization work progresses, additional details will be provided in the Crusader Fighter Report and the Corsair II Attack Report.

"COLLEGE" STARTS "POSTGRAD COURSE" - A new "post-graduate course" in F-8 weapons training has been instituted at "Crusader College," NAS Miramar, California.

Under the direction of Commander Harry J. Post, commanding officer of VF-124, the intensive four-week refresher course is being conducted by Lieutenant Commander John Hellman and a staff of nine instructors, most of them veterans of two combat deployments during the war in Vietnam.

The course incorporates 75 hours of ground training and 25 hours of flight training and includes advanced combat maneuvering, air-to-air tactics, use of the Sidewinder missile, air-to-ground delivery capabilities of the F-8, radar and ECM.



Members of the first class, representing squadrons back at home base at NAS Miramar after combat deployment, are shown in photo with Commander Post: Lieutenant (j.g.) Steve Russ, VF-53; Lieutenant (j.g.) Bob Walters, VF-162; Lieutenant (j.g.) John Laughter, VF-111; Lieutenant John Quisenberry, VF-51; Lieutenant Bill Switzer, VF-191, and Lieutenant Skip Giles, VF-194.

Postgraduate students return to their squadrons as weapons training officers, equipped with up-to-the-minute information and instruction covering the most recent developments in maximum effective use of the Crusader weapons system.

VF-162 COMMAND CHANGES - Commander Joseph A. Muka, Jr., has relieved Commander Robert F. Aumack as commanding officer of VF-162, NAS Miramar.

The new skipper (photo) had served as the squadron's executive officer since January. Commander Aumack, a former leader of the Navy's "Blue Angels" flight demonstration team, has been assigned to duty on the staff of Commander Carrier Division 2, Norfolk, Virginia.



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FIGHTER REPORT

PHOTO PILOT DODGES SAM MISSILE - Evasive maneuvers paid off for Lieutenant (j.g.) James S. Ozbirn when his photo-reconnaissance Crusader became the target for a North Vietnamese telephone-pole-size SAM surface-to-air missile while he was flying along the enemy coast on December 3.

"I was approaching the mouth of the Ca River to begin a photo run when I saw a missile rising out of low-lying ground fog near Vinh," said the photo pilot, a member of the VFP-63 detachment aboard USS Coral Sea. "It was far enough away so that I had plenty of time to take evasive action and avoid it. It exploded in a large ball of fire a couple of hundred feet from my aircraft. I was about two miles away from the coast at that time and I turned back inland and finished the photo run."



VF-111/VF-162 FLY FROM TICONDEROGA - The "Sundowners" of VF-111 and the "Hunters" of VF-162 operated from USS Ticonderoga while the carrier was undergoing refresher training off the California coast after a yard period in the Long Beach Naval Shipyard. The first F-8J arrested landing was made by Lieutenant H. K. Kesler, of VF-162. Flying an F-8H, Commander Jack Finney, skipper of VF-111, was the first "Sundowner" to land aboard. The "Tico" is commanded by Captain Norman K. McInnis.



F-8J DELIVERY - Pilots of VF-194 are flying the F-8J Crusader at NAS Miramar.

The squadron's first "J" was flown from Dallas by Commander Robert E. Roberts, skipper of the "Legendary Red Lightnings."



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EARLY BIRD VISITS "SUNDOWNERS" - Observers paid more than normal attention to the landing pattern at NAS Miramar one day last month when Waldo Waterman, 74-year-old San Diego pilot, flew his open-air cockpit "Chevy Bird" in for a special visit to the "Sundowners" of Fighter Squadron 111.

During his stay, the veteran airman - an Early Bird by virtue of having flown solo prior to December 17, 1917 - was made an honorary "Sundowner."

He also was presented with a bright orange flight suit bearing the marking "Early Bird, Waldo Waterman, Sundowners."

The presentation was made on behalf of the squadron (photo) by Commander C. G. Dimon, executive officer.

The aviation pioneer, who began his flying career in a Chanute type glider launched from a San Diego canyon rim in 1909, is credited with the distinction of being the world's senior commercial pilot.

He told the "Sundowners" he had built his pusher type "Chevy Bird" himself, "mainly from parts of other aircraft except for the main framing which supports the pilot and the motor," a Chevrolet Corvaire engine. The project occupied about a year and the "bird" was completed about four months ago.

Despite its seeming simplicity, he emphasized, his flying machine "is equipped with primary blind flight instrumentation, including a turn and bank indicator, directional gyro, and a radio."



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VF-191 PERSONNEL SALUTED – Captain C. N. Conatser, Commander Fleet Air Miramar, presented awards when two warrant officers and 30 enlisted men of Fighter Squadron 191 were honored for outstanding accomplishments during combat deployment aboard USS Ticonderoga.

Commander Clyde H. Tuomela, VF-191's commanding officer, and Commander Raymond D. Donnelly, executive officer, participated in an awards ceremony on the parade ground at NAS Miramar.

The "Satan's Kittens" of VF-191 returned in August after serving as part of Carrier Air Wing 19 aboard the "Tico" during the carrier's fourth tour of duty off the coast of Vietnam.

Navy Achievement Medals with Combat V for meritorious achievement were awarded to Warrant Officer S. R. Beezley, Warrant Officer W. E. Rietz, AFCM R. L. Vernon, AEC H. C. Grimes, AM1 A. L. McGregor, AM1 C. R. Ross and AM2 P. W. Bryant.

Commander in Chief Pacific letters of commendation for meritorious service were presented to ADC J. O. Royal, AMC J. I. Huse, AMC W. D. Wright, ATC J. J. Russo, AM1 K. B. Millar and AO1 M. L. Allgire.

Commander Seventh Fleet letters of commendation for outstanding performance of duty were received by AMCS J. A. Grabarkiewicz, AMCS R. B. Ballard, AE1 J. H. P. May, Jr., PR1 D. W. Witten and AM3 L. A. Myers.

Letters of commendation from the commanding officer, USS Ticonderoga for outstanding performance of duty were received by AO2 R. H. Baker, AO2 L. W. Jackson, ADJ3 G. L. Goochey, ATR3 J. W. Liebich, AQF3 R. C. Martin, AO3 D. L. McCutchan, ADJ3 L. H. Moore, AZ3 W. F. Stoddard, AO3 T. W. Weaver, ADJ3 M. E. West, AN S. Burden, Jr., AN J. R. Dangel, AN J. Gibbs and AN E. R. Langton.

Unable to be present for the ceremony and slated to receive awards and letters of commendation at a later date were Chief Warrant Officer W. E. Courtney, AE2 W. F. Mears, ADJ3 R. B. Stephenson, PR3 W. J. Ellis, AM3 W. P. Crume and AO2 D. V. Covault.

ORISKANY PILOTS RETURN FROM VIETNAM – Back at NAS Miramar, California, after seven months of combat over Vietnam are the pilots of Fighter Squadrons 162 and 111 and Detachment 34 of Light Photographic Squadron 63.

The VF-162 "Hunters" and the VF-111 "Sundowners" flying their Crusaders into Miramar from the USS Oriskany January 30 were led by their skippers, Commander C. A. L. Swanson and Commander Bob Rasmussen. The VFP-63 detachment was led by Commander Ronald G. Sonniksen, officer-in-charge.

Commander Swanson (shown in photo during a visit to the LTV Aerospace Corporation plant February 12) had flown his 200th combat mission the day before he left Yankee Station. On February 9, he was relieved as CO by Commander Bob Aumack, formerly executive officer of VF-162. He will report for duty with the Anti-Air Warfare Branch, Service Test Division, Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River, Maryland.



Among the pilots returning was Lieutenant (j. g.) Craig Taylor, who had left Miramar less than two months earlier to join VF-111 as a replacement pilot. December 10, four days after his departure, his wife, Fran, gave birth to their first child, Michael Craig Taylor. On January 2, Lieutenant Taylor was shot down by anti-aircraft fire while flying his first mission and was rescued by a helicopter off the coast of North Vietnam.

Welcomers assembled to greet the squadrons included Lieutenant Richard E. Wyman, credited with the 12th MIG kill scored by Crusader pilots during the war in Vietnam. Lieutenant Wyman had left the Oriskany early and arrived home a week before his fellow pilots.

The homecomers included Lieutenant Commander Richard W. Schaffert, who had kept four MIGs engaged for six minutes on December 14 before Lieutenant Wyman and other F-8 pilots arrived to take over the aerial battle. Attacked while providing fighter escort for an A-4, Lieutenant Commander Schaffert held the MIGs off until Lieutenant Wyman and Commanders Swanson and Rasmussen could respond to a radio alert.

Flying the lead Crusader for the fly-in from the Oriskany was Commander Burton H. Shepherd, skipper of Carrier Air Wing 16, who told newsmen his 110 pilots flew more than 9,500 missions and dropped more than 7,500 tons of ordnance during the deployment.

CRUSADER



**FIGHTER
REPORT**

"SUNDOWNER" DESCRIBES BATTLE WITH MIGs – "They were good pilots – very professional," Lieutenant Commander Richard W. Schaffert, of VF-111, says of the four MIG-17 pilots who tried every trick in the book in an unsuccessful attempt to shoot him down over North Vietnam last December.

"I had to keep leading them into situations where they thought they could get me and then get out before they had a good shot," he adds, detailing what happened after the enemy pilots jumped his F-8 while he was escorting an A-4 piloted by Lieutenant (j.g.) Chuck Nelson.



While Lieutenant Nelson radioed for assistance, Lieutenant Commander Schaffert (photo) engaged the MIGs and found himself pursuing two of them while the other two were on his tail. Wheeling and turning violently, he managed to dodge the enemy's missiles for six minutes.

"We fought to a draw," he relates. "Finally, they were out of missiles and I was out of missiles. Three of them left the scene. Chuck Nelson was chasing the fourth MIG, forcing it to maneuver so it couldn't make a straight-out getaway."

When Commander C. A. L. Swanson and Lieutenant Richard E. Wyman, of VF-162, and Commander Bob Rasmussen, of VF-111, arrived and went into action the tailend-Charlie MIG was shot down after a "good old-fashioned dogfight."

"He was a good pilot," Lieutenant Wyman said. "He tried to get one of us with his guns. He had two sets of cannons and the whole front end of his plane would light up when he fired. I finally got him with a Sidewinder."



VF-24, VF-211 AWARDED UNIT COMMENDATION – For "exceptional meritorious service in Vietnam," the Navy Unit Commendation has been awarded to Carrier Air Wing 21 – including Fighter Squadrons VF-24 and VF-211 – and to the USS Bon Homme Richard for combat operations between February 26 and July 30, 1967.

Vice Admiral A. M. Shinn, COMNAVAIRPAC, made the presentations to Captain Charles K. Ruiz, commanding officer of the "Bonnie Dick," and Commander H. L. Terry, who assumed command of the air wing in October, relieving Commander Albert J. Monger.

Ceremonies on the West Coast also included presentation of the Distinguished Flying Cross to Commander Ralph B. Rutherford, skipper of VF-211 (left in photo), and Commander D. J. Ellison (right), skipper of VF-24, shown with Commander Terry.



The unit commendation was the second won by the two Crusader squadrons, previously honored as part of the CVW-21/ USS Hancock team serving together on a 1965-1966 deployment.

CRUS



FIGHT
REPORT

THREE F-8 RESERVE SQUADRONS CALLED UP – VF-703, NAS Dallas, Texas; VF-661, Naval Air Facility, Andrews AFB, Washington, D.C., and VF-931, NAS Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, were among six "weekend warrior" Navy fighter and attack squadrons called up January 25 as President Johnson responded to the Pueblo crisis.



VF-703's roster of officers and enlisted men includes eight Braniff International pilots and seven LTV Aerospace Corporation "weekend warriors" (left photo, left to right): AE3 M. H. Miller, Lieutenant J. C. Hodges, Lieutenant Commander John Pulice, Lieutenant J. M. Bittick, Commander Frank Liberato, squadron skipper, Lieutenant Commander P. J. Smith, and Lieutenant W. N. Williams. Among their well-wishers is Vice President Hubert Humphrey (right photo), who visited NAS Dallas on February 9 while attending a conference in Big D. The Vice President, escorted by Commander Liberato and Captain David S. Crockett, CO of the air station, termed the Reserves "a significant part of our defense structure."

Seven of VF-703's Reserve pilots are veterans of combat in Vietnam and several were called up previously during the Cuban, Dominican Republic, and Suez crises.

The skipper of VF-661 is Commander Lemuel O. Warfield, a Korean War veteran who is a merchandising manager for an oil company. He is shown in photo handing an F-8 checklist to Lieutenant John C. Black, who completed three years of active duty in 1965 after flying combat missions over Vietnam.

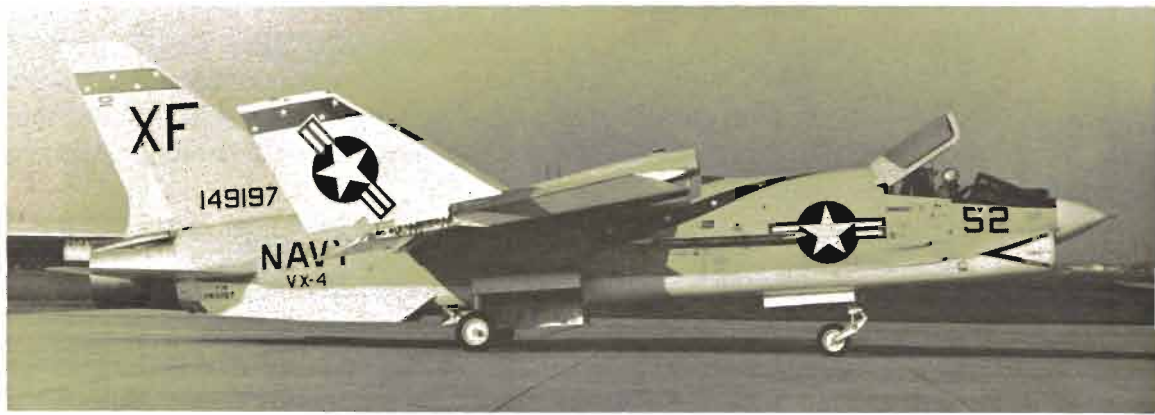
The "weekend warriors" called up with VF-931, commanded by Commander Robert T. Hogan, a computer salesman in civilian life, included Airman Edward P. Goodwin, a Sears, Roebuck and Company store salesman who found himself rushing through a January 26 wedding rather than the February 17 ceremony planned originally. Also called up was Lieutenant Commander Herbert R. Wees,



who hobbled into squadron headquarters on crutches as the result of a broken hip received in an auto accident December 14.

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VX-4 DETERMINES "BEST USE" FOR FIGHTERS – Air Development Squadron Four, based at NAS Point Mugu, California, has the assigned mission of "conducting, in an operational environment, tests and evaluations of aircraft weapons systems and associated support systems and developing tactics and doctrines for their use."

The mission includes development of all-weather fighter intercept tactics for employment of air-launched guided missiles against all types of targets. As Fleet Air Detachment Point Mugu, VX-4 assists and supports Fleet squadrons deployed to that base for missile training and firing on the Pacific Missile Range.

"Testers, appraisers and evaluators" is the way the squadron describes the functions of its 28 officers and 200 enlisted men led by Captain C. N. Pierozzi (photo), commanding officer. The techniques and procedures developed for maximum utilization of an aircraft weapons system are reported to CNO and passed on to the Fleet squadrons.



During its 15-year history, VX-4 has evaluated most of the Navy's air-launched guided missiles, including the current models of the Sparrow, Sidewinder and Bullpup. The squadron's stable of aircraft includes the F-8, F-4, T-33 and C-45.

Squadron responsibility includes preparation of tactical information on the F-8 and F-4 for inclusion in tactical manuals – the "bibles" for employment of the aircraft in defensive and offensive warfare. VX-4 also is developing a capability for all Navy fighter aircraft to perform as conventional weapon attack bombers.

Current testing and evaluation projects include F-8 conventional weapons delivery techniques and tactics, F-8 and F-4 weapons system performance against electronic countermeasures, operational evaluation of the all-weather carrier landing system, and development of tactics and techniques for employing defensive electronic countermeasures in the F-8 and F-4.

"Commanding VX-4 is the best job in the Navy for a captain," Captain Pierozzi says. "The work is extremely interesting and important to the future of Naval aviation. We also are contributing significant tactical outputs to our fighter squadrons in Southeast Asia."

DFC AWARDS MADE TO VF-211 PILOTS – Combat action over North Vietnam has won a Gold Star in lieu of a second Distinguished Flying Cross for Commander Ralph B. Rutherford, skipper of VF-211, and the DFC for another of the squadron's pilots, Lieutenant (j.g.) Billy Sam Foster. The presentations were made by Captain S. W. Vejtasa, Commander Fleet Air Miramar, California.

Commander Rutherford's DFC Gold Star was for action during a flight from USS Bon Homme Richard as leader of six Crusaders assigned to combat air patrol for a strike group attacking the Hanoi thermal power plant on June 10, 1967. At the height of the strike in an "extremely hostile environment of heavy flak and surface-to-air missiles," he "attacked a large-caliber flak site and, though not tasked for flak suppression, silenced the guns with 20-millimeter cannon fire."



Commander Rutherford also received a Gold Star in lieu of a second Navy Commendation Medal for leading a flight of F-8s as fighter cover for a strike against the Bac Giang power plant on May 20.

Lieutenant Foster won his DFC for action during an earlier May 19 strike on the Hanoi power plant. Wingman to the section leader of six Crusaders flying CAP, he "aggressively engaged the first MIGs that attacked the strike group." During the engagement, his section leader



"disappeared" in "a violent SAM explosion" and he became separated from the strike group. While rejoining, he "attacked another group of four MIGs although he was at a tactical and numerical disadvantage," damaged the leading MIG with 20-millimeter cannon fire during "a high 'G', low altitude dogfight, and thereby prevented further attack by the enemy aircraft."

The "Checkmates" pilot also received two Navy Commendation Medals, one for "pinpoint ordnance delivery during a dangerous flak suppression mission" against the heavily defended Uong Bi power plant. The other award was for silencing a flak site with "accurate rocket fire" after recovering from an inverted dive when his F-8 was "engulfed by flak bursts" during a strike on a North Vietnam railroad facility.

CRUSADER



FIGHTER REPORT

FORMER "BLUE" LEADS VF-162 - Commander Robert F. Aumack, a former leader of the Navy's "Blue Angels" flight demonstration team, has assumed command of VF-162, NAS Miramar.



The new skipper of the "Hunters" is shown returning the salute of Commander C. A. L. Swanson, relieved for a new assignment at NATC Patuxent River, Maryland. Commander Aumack, officer-in-charge of the "Blue Angels" from 1963 to 1966, had served since August, 1967 as executive officer of VF-162, which returned to the West Coast in January after combat action over Vietnam from USS Oriskany.

Commander Swanson has been credited with the distinction of leading "the first F-8 squadron to utilize fully the bombing capability of the Crusader in the daily air-to-ground war in North Vietnam and in major strikes against heavily defended targets in the Hanoi-Haiphong area."



"CHECKMATES" WIN OTHER DECORATIONS - For "successful completion of multiple, extremely hazardous combat strikes in Southeast Asia" during deployment with USS Bon Homme Richard last year, Lieutenant (j.g.) Joseph M. Shea, of VF-211, has received five Air Medals. Previously awarded the Silver Star for shooting down a MIG 17 interceptor on May 19, 1967, he also has received two Navy Commendation Medals for his "substantial role in two dangerous flak suppression missions" over North Vietnam.

Other presentations made to VF-211 officers and chief petty officers by Captain S. W. Vejtasa, Commander Fleet Air Miramar, include the Fourth Air Medal to Lieutenant Commander Marshall O. Wright and Lieutenant Cole J. Pierce for their roles in a strike on May 21. Flying a flak suppression mission, the two pilots "silenced flak sites in an extremely hostile environment and enabled strike aircraft to place their bombs on target." Lieutenant Commander Wright previously scored a MIG kill on May 1.

The Third Air Medal was presented to Lieutenant (j.g.) William P. Bertsch for putting a flak site out of operation on June 10. "Though not specifically assigned as a flak suppressor," the citation noted, "LTJG Bertsch materially contributed to the destruction of the Hanoi power plant."

Lieutenant (j.g.) Thomas J. Blattner won the Navy Commendation Medal for participation in a surface-to-air missile suppression assignment on May 20. His citation stated that "he drew the fire of at least three SAMs and helped destroy a threatening 85-millimeter flak site."

CPO Frank D. Lander received the Navy Achievement Medal for supervision of electrical systems maintenance and repair. CPO Frank E. Dively received the Navy Commendation Medal for F-8 jet engine repair.

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AKVA "LAUNCHES" CRUSADERS – What does a former Navy F-8 aircraft project manager do when he commands an attack cargo ship? If he's Captain Roy Farmer, skipper of USS Seminole, he manages eventually to get back into the Crusader business one way or another.

Crews of Navy ships encountering Seminole between Pearl Harbor and San Diego recently had good reason for rubbing their eyes in disbelief when they saw two Crusaders "spotted" on deck space normally filled with amphibious landing craft. And, unmistakably, the tails of the F-8s were marked "USS SEMINOLE, AKVA 104."

Thereby, of course, hangs a tale. Normally, Seminole's mission is to transport and land cargo and heavy equipment in amphibious assaults against enemy beaches, using landing craft carried above the ship's hatches. It came to pass, however, that the vessel was in Honolulu, bound for San Diego, and had deck space available at a time when two F-8D Crusaders were waiting on a dock at Pearl Harbor for shipment to NAS North Island, California.

What would a former F-8 project manager do under the circumstances? That's what Captain Farmer did – the Seminole quickly loaded the two Crusaders scheduled for modernization under the F-8 remanufacturing program designed to extend the service life of the aircraft until 1975.

And what do the skipper and crew of an attack cargo ship do under such circumstances? They do what comes naturally, deciding that the classification AKVA (Assault Aircraft Cargo Ship) is more appropriate than AKA and letting this be known to the world by providing suitable markings on the tails of the two aircraft encased in white cocoons for preservation. The new markings incorporated the distinctive SO letters normally used to signify Seminole on the bow ramps of all of the ship's landing craft.

The "amphib's" arrival at San Diego with its somewhat unusual cargo did not, of course, fail to attract considerable attention. But, once the Crusaders were unloaded, things quieted down.

As the man said, the Amphibious Force of the U. S. Navy prides itself on being a ready force – specialists in carrying out an unconventional operation on short notice or, for that matter, no notice at all.

SO
USS SEMINOLE
AKVA 104



VC-7 PROVIDES "FLYING WORKHORSES" - VC-7, the Navy's only all-jet composite squadron, operates out of NAS Miramar, California, to provide utility aircraft services for 10 major commands of the Pacific Fleet.

The insignia of the "Tallyhoers," showing Pegasus, the winged horse of Greek mythology, towing an aerial target day and night in any weather, symbolizes VC-7's mission of serving scores of ships and squadrons. Services include towing of aerial targets and launching of self-propelled targets for air-to-air and surface-to-air gunnery and missile firing; airborne targets for the Fleet Anti-Air Warfare Center; radar calibrations, electronics countermeasures exercises, and inflight refueling.



Scheduling to meet the special demands of the modern weapons systems of the Fleet is a science for the squadron's 31 pilots and five ground officers, supported by 440 enlisted men representing 29 specialized ratings.

Led by Commander R. L. McLaughlin (photo), with Lieutenant Commander A. C. Friedman as executive officer, VC-7 utilizes the F-8 Crusader, the A-4 Skyhawk and the F-4 Phantom to serve COMNAVAIRPAC, COMFIRSTFLT, COMOPTEVFORPAC, COMPACMISLAN, COMFLETRAGRU, COMCRUDESPAC, FAAWTRACEN and COMFAIR-MIRAMAR.



Throughout the squadron's 25-year history, the advent of new Navy aerial weapons has created requirements for targets for use in training personnel in the new weapons and the weapons systems. Extensive experimentation goes into perfection of new targets and methods for their presentation.

The air-to-air missile, for example, requires a target simulating fast, high-flying enemy aircraft. The TDU-22 towed target and the AQM-37A rocket-propelled target enable FLECOMPRON SEVEN to provide high altitude, supersonic targets for firing of live missiles in daytime, darkness or instrument weather. The maneuvering Dart target offers a high and low altitude high-speed maneuvering "bull's-eye" for air-to-air gunnery and surface-to-air gunnery and missile practice.



Wide World Photos

ROCKETS BLAST ENEMY NEAR KHE SANH – Low level rocket barrages by Crusader pilots flying from USS Ticonderoga blasted entrenched enemy forces as aerial attacks helped to open the way for relief of the Marines at Khe Sanh in northern South Vietnam.

Repeated strikes included an April 2 attack in which pilots of Fighter Squadrons 194 and 191 destroyed bunkers and weapons sites near the perimeter of the forward combat base. "After we had escorted a C-130 on a supply drop into Khe Sanh, we picked up another forward air controller who led us to the bunkers," Commander Robert E. Roberts reported.

On April 4, a flight of VF-194 Crusaders made a rocket attack on a troop concentration and artillery position south of Khe Sanh and reported three secondary fires. "After our forward air controller had dropped smoke flares on the target, we rolled in and strafed because the controller said he thought there might be some automatic weapons in the area," said Lieutenant (j.g.) Joseph A. Garuba. "We then fired our rockets, putting them all in the target area. Smoke from our fires was still coming up as we left."

Other F-8 pilots, using ground radar controllers to penetrate overcast skies, teamed with A-4 Skyhawks of Carrier Air Wing 19 to drop 500-pound bombs on enemy artillery positions in the I Corps area. Radar drops also were made on troop concentrations, mortar positions, a supply area and a truck park.

These April strikes by the air wing pilots followed an earlier period of 38 consecutive days on the line at Yankee Station in the Gulf of Tonkin. During that line period, the "Tico" launched more than 700 combat sorties to support ground troops in South Vietnam.

VF-194 and VF-191 are commanded, respectively, by Commander A. E. Ostrand and Commander D. D. Aldern.

CRUSADER



FIGHTER REPORT

PHOTO DETACHMENT HOLDS DISTINCTION – Back from Vietnam after flying more than 220 combat reconnaissance sorties from USS Intrepid in their photo Crusaders, the six-man Detachment 11 of VFP-63 returned with an unusual claim to distinction as the first photo detachment to make a Vietnam deployment aboard an antisubmarine warfare carrier, CVS-11.

Shown on the flight deck of the relabeled "special attack" flat-top of the Atlantic Fleet are the detachment's pilots and photo interpreters (left to right) Lieutenant (j.g.) Gardie Gray, Lieutenant (j.g.) Jim Vandervest, Lieutenant Ed Clemmer, Commander Don Barrett, Lieutenant Andre Coltrin and Lieutenant (j.g.) Fred Pfluger.



Attached to Carrier Air Wing 10, the F-8 detachment was aboard when the "Fighting I" left Norfolk, Virginia, in May, 1967, and began launching air strikes against North Vietnam late in June as the only CVS to perform light attack duties.



VFP-63 PERSONNEL DECORATED – Action in Vietnam has won honors for 12 officers and six enlisted men of Light Photographic Squadron 63, NAS Miramar, California.

The highest awards, the first and second Distinguished Flying Crosses, were presented to Commander Thomas D. Barrett, Officer-in-Charge of VFP-63's Detachment 11 during combat operations last year with USS Intrepid and the Seventh Fleet.

Commander Barrett was decorated for "heroism and extraordinary achievement" during two specific photo reconnaissance missions over North Vietnam. Presentation of DFCs and of the second, seventh, eighth and ninth Air Medals and the third, fourth and fifth Navy Commendation Medals was made by Captain S. W. Vejtasa, COMFAIRMIRAMAR.



Other award recipients included Lieutenant Commander William G. Weaks, seventh Air Medal and Navy Commendation Medal; Lieutenant Gary B. Gray, fifth, sixth, seventh Air Medals and NCM; Lieutenant (j.g.) Phillip R. LaBerge, sixth Air Medal; Commander Ronald D. Sonniksen, second, third, fourth, fifth Air Medals; Lieutenant Phillip K. Sherman, fifth Air Medal; Lieutenant (j.g.) Frederick W. Pfluger, fourth Air Medal and NCM; Lieutenant (j.g.) Charles H. Rudd, third and fourth Air Medals and NCM; Lieutenant (j.g.) David M. Beam, third and fourth Air Medals and NCM.

Navy Achievement Medals were presented to Lieutenant (j.g.) James Vandervest, Lieutenant Everett Clemmer, Lieutenant (j.g.) John Czekanski, AMSC Robert VanCourt, AK1 Eduardo Gruta, PH1 Ralph McLaughlin and ADJ1 Ronald Beeler. CINCPACFLT commendations were received by AE2 David Sparks and ADJ2 Richard Grabowski.

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PILOT MAKES IT "THE HARD WAY" – Lieutenant Russell O. Berry, a pilot who made it the hard way, is finally flying Crusaders with VF-124 at "Fighter-town," NAS Miramar, California.

Lieutenant Berry's Navy career began in 1963, when he entered the service as an officer candidate airman. "I've always wanted to be a Naval Aviator but the Navy urgently needed radar intercept officers in 1963," he explains, "so I chose to be a part of a pilot/RIO team as this was as close to being a pilot as was possible at that time."

Trained with VF-121 and designated a Naval Flight Officer, he reported to VF-114 and deployed with that squadron in October, 1965, as part of CVW-11 aboard USS Kitty Hawk. Returning from combat duty, he began flight training, received his wings in January, 1967, and now, at long last, is flying the F-8 – "my first choice because I wanted to fly the 'Last of the Gunfighters.'"



When he took over a Crusader cockpit for the first time, his background included 155 combat missions over Vietnam as "backseat" radar intercept officer in F-4s and he had won the Distinguished Flying Cross, 12 Air Medals, the Navy Commendation Medal with combat V, the Navy Unit Commendation, the National Defense Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal with two bronze stars and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.



VF-211 GETS F-8H CRUSADERS – Receipt of the first F-8H model Crusader assigned to Fighter Squadron 211 turned out to be quite an occasion at NAS Miramar. The F-8H, remanufactured from the original F-8D under a Navy program for extending the service life of the Crusader until 1975, was presented to the squadron's skipper, Commander Ralph B. Rutherford, by Lieutenant R. E. Lyon. The "welcoming committee" included VF-211's new executive officer, Commander Robert A. Van Arsdol.



The "Fighting Checkmates" have completed a predeployment air-to-air gunnery exercise at MCAS Yuma, Arizona, demonstrating the Crusader's "gunfighter" role by shooting up 20 towed targets and scoring more than 450 hits on aerial banners.

"Top guns" were Commander Rutherford and Lieutenant Commander Marshall O. Wright, another Vietnam combat veteran who was credited with a MIG kill last May during a previous deployment.

ADER

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VF-51, VF-53 IN COMBAT – Crusaders operating from USS Bon Homme Richard were in action April 10, bombing artillery sites, storage areas and troop concentrations along the north edge of the Demilitarized Zone in Vietnam.

The "Screaming Eagles" of VF-51, led by Commander W. I. Parrish, and the "Iron Angels" of VF-53, led by Commander Harry Blake, are serving as part of Carrier Air Wing 5. VF-51 is the first Navy squadron to be equipped with the remanufactured F-8H Crusader; VF-53's pilots are flying F-8Es.

The command of the "Iron Angels" changed April 2, when Commander Paul T. Gillcrist was relieved by Commander Blake, who had joined the squadron on the line off Vietnam in March, 1967 during an earlier deployment. Commander Gillcrist will report to CNO for duty.

Command of the "Bonnie Dick" also has changed. Captain Theodore P. Dankworth has relieved Captain Charles K. Ruiz, assigned as a Naval representative at Omaha headquarters of the Strategic Air Command. Captain Dankworth previously served as commander of Carrier Air Wing 21 and as commanding officer of the dock landing ship USS Plymouth Rock. Prior to reporting aboard the carrier he served as Director, Analysis and Reports Directorate with Joint Task Force Two under the Joint Chiefs of Staff.



COMMANDER CATES LEADS CVW-16 – Commander Charles W. Cates has assumed command of Carrier Air Wing 16, which returned to NAS Lemoore, California, earlier this year after a combat cruise aboard USS Oriskany.

Commander Cates relieved Commander Burton H. Shepherd, who will be stationed with the Department of Defense staff in Washington, D. C. Prior to assuming command, the new skipper served with the Operations and Readiness Division of Staff, Commander Naval Air Force, Pacific, in San Diego.



VF-211 CHIEF RETIRES – ASC Wilmer G. Eichelberger, USN, of VF-211, has been piped over the side in retirement ceremonies aboard NAS Miramar, where a letter of appreciation from Commander R. B. Rutherford was read by Commander R. A. Van Arsdol, executive officer.

Chief Eichelberger's Navy career included service at NAS Trinidad, British West Indies; at NAAS Chincoteague; with VF-72 at Quonset Point; with VA-66 aboard USS Ticonderoga; and with the Flight Test Division, Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River. He also served at Rota, Spain before joining VF-213 for a combat cruise aboard USS Kitty Hawk and he reported to the "Fighting Checkmates" of VF-211 last November.



"EAGLES," "ANGELS" STRIKE IN VIETNAM – Striking at targets near Khe Sanh, along the borders of the Demilitarized Zone, and in the Panhandle region of North Vietnam, the "Screaming Eagles" of VF-51 and the "Iron Angels" of VF-53 clobbered the enemy in numerous April missions.

VF-51's operations from USS Bon Homme Richard included an attack on bunkers and trenches three miles west of Khe Sanh. "Our forward air controller spotted the position on the crest of one of a big line of hills and marked it with red smoke," Lieutenant (j.g.) Daniel G. Garton reported. "Right after two of my runs the FAC called out 'good hits.' They were right in there. After we released all our bombs, he went back for a damage assessment. We got three bunkers and destroyed 26 meters of trenchline."

Supply barges were the targets for a combined attack by Crusader pilots of VF-53 and A-4 Skyhawk pilots of VA-212. "We headed inland when we spotted barges strung out along the west side of a river," said Lieutenant (j.g.) John A. Griner. "Right after I made my drop I pulled my wing up to have a look. The hits looked good. When we came back around to get a damage assessment, it looked like a couple of the barges had vaporized. There were pieces of boats floating in the water, but that was all. We destroyed three of them and damaged another two."



"TICO" PILOTS KNOCK OUT BRIDGES – Seeking to cut enemy supply routes to the south, Crusader pilots flying from USS Ticonderoga (VF-194, VF-191) teamed with A-4 Skyhawk pilots to put five bridges out of commission with 500-pound bombs during repeated April 27 attacks on a Panhandle supply complex north of Vinh.

In another of many April actions, F-8 pilots touched off three fires during a rocket attack on a troop concentration and artillery site south of Khe Sanh and bombed anti-aircraft positions and a power plant supplying electricity to a military cave storage complex near Vinh.

CRUSADER



**FIGHTER
REPORT**

LT. COL. LINDELL ON DUTY AT F-8 DESIGN DESK – The man behind the F-8 desk in the Fighter Design Branch of the Naval Air Systems Command is Lieutenant Colonel Clifford A. Lindell, USMC, a pilot and aeronautical engineer whose military career has included service in Vietnam.

Lieutenant Colonel Lindell began flight training in 1954 and was designated a Naval Aviator in May, 1955. Following service with VMF(AW)-513 in Japan, and as a flight instructor at Pensacola, he attended the U. S. Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California, and Princeton University.



Graduated with the M. S. degree in aeronautical engineering, he was assigned to VMF(AW)-115, flying F4D-1s. Service with this squadron included a seven-month period in 1962 under OPCON of CVW-7 aboard USS Independence with the Sixth Fleet. For the next three years, he was on independent duty at the Federal Aviation Agency's R&D Center at Atlantic City, New Jersey. Assigned as an aeronautical engineer in the Technical Research Branch and flying FAA aircraft, he worked on research programs for civilian automatic landing systems, improved altimetry and wet runway braking systems.

In 1965 and 1966, he served with the First Marine Air Wing at Iwakuni, Japan, and Danang, Vietnam. Returning to CONUS in January, 1967, he commanded an A-6 intermediate maintenance activity. Prior to reporting to NAVAIR-SYSCOM in January, 1968, he checked out in the Crusader with VMF(AW)-333 at MCAS Beaufort and he recently flew the F-8H model at the Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River, Maryland.



FORMER CRUSADER DRIVERS FLY CORSAIR II – Six former Crusader fighter pilots with a total of more than 6,000 hours in F-8 cockpits are on the roster of the "Bulls" of VA-37, the Corsair II attack squadron led by Commander "Andy" Burnett at NAS Cecil Field, Florida. Left to right in photo: Lieutenant Commanders Bobby Lee, John Dechant and Barry Kunkel; Lieutenant G. F. Talken; and Lieutenant Commanders Wayne Musick and Edward Jackson. Lieutenant Commander Lee served with VF-24 in Vietnam and was credited with a MIG kill May 19, 1967; Lieutenant Talken saw action with VF-53.

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VF-111 PILOTS RECEIVE DFC AWARDS – For "heroism and extraordinary achievement" over North Vietnam, Distinguished Flying Crosses have been presented to Commander Robert L. Rasmussen, commanding officer of VF-111, and Lieutenant Commander Foster S. Teague, officer-in-charge of the squadron's Detachment 11.



Commander Rasmussen (center in photo) received his DFC on April 12, when he was relieved as skipper of the "Sundowners" by Commander Jack L. Finney (right), shown returning the salute of Commander Charles W. Cates, CO of Carrier Air Wing 16. The presentation was made by Rear Admiral F. H. Michaelis, Commander, Carrier Division 9.

The DFC citation for Commander Rasmussen, assigned to duty with the Bureau of Naval Personnel, in Washington, detailed combat action while flying from USS Oriskany during a series of four strikes against Hanoi in October, 1967. Leading fighter elements providing protective cover for main strike groups, he "repeatedly and deliberately exposed his sections to the deadly opposition of missiles and anti-aircraft guns in an attempt to draw the heavy fire away from the strike forces." His planning and leadership during target combat air patrol missions, "while drawing an overwhelming number of surface-to-air missiles away from the strike group, deterred all hostile action by enemy aircraft."

Describing escort provided for a missile suppression element in an attack on Phuc Yen airfield, the citation noted that the commander and his teammate penetrated the area in advance of the strike force and "silenced a preselected site." Then, "bracketed by intense barrages of heavy caliber anti-aircraft fire, Commander Rasmussen called perfect jinxing maneuvers which allowed safe passage through the curtain of flak."

Lieutenant Commander Teague was presented with two DFCs on April 5 by Captain S. W. Vejtasa, Commander Fleet Air Miramar, California. On October 5, 1967, leading a section of Detachment 11 of the "Sundowners" in operations from USS Intrepid, he was returning from a photo plane escort mission over Haiphong when he spotted a pilot parachuting from an A-4 on fire over the city's harbor. Reversing course, he maintained a rescue combat air patrol despite enemy flak barrages and SAM missiles until the downed pilot was rescued by a helicopter. On November 17, over Hanoi, he was calling "the positions of several lifting surface-to-air missiles" for a strike group under escort when he saw one aircraft take a direct hit. Joining on the flaming aircraft, he provided escort until the pilot ejected and then flew in orbit "until the fate of the downed pilot was confirmed."



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ADMIRAL HEYWARD BECOMES NAVY'S "GRAY EAGLE" – Vice Admiral Alexander S. Heyward, Jr., Chief of Naval Air Training, NAS Pensacola, Florida, is the U. S. Navy's 18th "Gray Eagle" – the pilot who has been designated a Naval Aviator for the longest period of time.



The Gray Eagle Award trophy was received by Admiral Heyward (left in photo) from Admiral Charles D. Griffin, USN (Ret.), former Commander in Chief, Allied Forces Southern Europe.

The new Gray Eagle was designated a Naval Aviator in November, 1931. He assumed his special status officially on February 1 with the retirement of Admiral Griffin, whose designation dated back to 1930.

LTV Aerospace Corporation sponsors the trophy, bestowed "in recognition of a clear eye, a steady hand and daring defiance of gravity and the law of averages." Paul Thayer, corporation president, participated in the presentation to Admiral Heyward.



VFP DETACHMENT RETURNS – Detachment 43 of VFP-63 has returned to NAS Miramar, California, after combat duty aboard USS Coral Sea in the Gulf of Tonkin. Serving as a component of Air Wing 15, the detachment was led by Lieutenant Commander James W. Rossen, officer-in-charge.



COMMANDER BLAKE LEADS "IRON ANGELS" – Commander Harry R. Blake, new skipper of the "Iron Angels" of Fighter Squadron 53, is a veteran of combat in World War II, the Korean conflict, and the war in Vietnam. Prior to assuming his command April 7 aboard USS Bon Homme Richard in the Gulf of Tonkin, he had served as executive officer of VF-53.

Commander Blake began his Navy career in 1943 and served with amphibious forces in the invasions of Normandy, Southern France and Okinawa. He received his B.A. degree from San Jose State College in 1950 and completed flight training at Pensacola. He flew F9F-5s with the "Pacemakers" of VF-121 in Korea in 1951 and 1952, served as an instructor at Pensacola, attended Line School and CIC School, and served aboard USS Midway and on the staff of Commander, Carrier Division 7.



After F-8 transition with VF-124 in 1962, he made a cruise to WestPac with the "Red Lightnings" of VF-194. He reported back to VF-124 for instructor duty in January, 1964 and joined VF-53 on the line off Vietnam in March, 1967, during a previous squadron deployment.

PHOTO UNIT "BLUEPRINTS" TARGETS – When two previously undetected North Vietnamese military installations went up in smoke one day last month, Detachment 31 of Light Photographic Squadron 63 shared credit for the destruction with the attack pilots who made the bombing runs from USS Bon Homme Richard.

The strikes followed earlier sweeps over enemy territory by pilots of the detachment's RF-8 photo Crusaders and study by its photo analysis experts of pictures obtained during the reconnaissance missions.



Commander Bruce Miller, skipper of Carrier Air Wing 5, led two attacks launched after Photo Intelligenceman Third Class Eugene Young (who studies about 500 reconnaissance photos a day) spotted a surface-to-air missile site in a strip of photos of a field five miles north of Vinh.

"In the morning, we got a large secondary explosion and a big column of smoke from the site and our rockets heavily damaged the radar vans," Commander Miller reported. "In the afternoon, we went back and finished the job, destroying at least three SAM launchers."

At the same time, other "Bonnie Dick" pilots were blasting a Vinh petroleum storage area detected by Lieutenant (j. g.) Edward Haffey in a single photo among many he was studying. "We were lucky to get that photo," he said. "Air turbulence slipped one side of the photo plane a few degrees and the cameras had the POL area on only one frame."

Late May operations by Bon Homme Richard's Crusader fighter pilots (VF-51 and VF-53) included destruction of a 100-millimeter anti-aircraft position west of Dong Hoi.



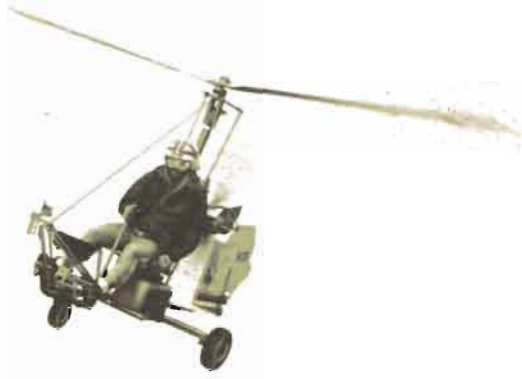
VF-191, VF-194 IN ACTION – Operating from USS Ticonderoga, F-8 pilots of VF-191 and VF-194 flew through SAM defenses and heavy anti-aircraft fire during May and June attacks mounted to hamper the flow of enemy war material through the Panhandle region of North Vietnam.

Troop concentrations, bunkers, bridges, cave storage complexes, truck parks, ferries and supply barges were among targets for the Crusader squadrons and other squadrons of Carrier Air Wing 19.

CRUSADER



**FIGHTER
REPORT**



IT'S A BIRD! – When VF-124 Crusader driver Lieutenant (j. g.) Steve Marinshaw gets ready to take to the air for leisure time tooling around in his do-it-yourself gyro-copter, the proceedings are something to see according to NAS Miramar, California observers.

In the stirring words of an account forwarded by Lieutenant (j. g.) Susan Bowles, public affairs officer for the squadron: "Watching the preparations for takeoff is reminiscent of a World War I fighter pilot leaving to tangle with the Red Baron."

Beginning with blueprints for the basic craft, the VF-124 pilot created his custom-built flying machine by utilizing a background in aeronautical engineering, his Navy flight training, and the facilities of "Fightertown's" hobby shop and a friend's garage. An investment of \$1,600 in cash and the volunteer off-duty assistance of another squadron pilot, Lieutenant (j. g.) Don Wallis, and of Navy metalsmiths, welders and machinists produced a whirly-bird able to fly at more than 80 miles an hour with the cooperation of its 72-horsepower drone engine.

"The aircraft is very sensitive to the controls and requires an experienced pilot to gain full benefit of the bird's potential, but flying it is a ball," Lieutenant Marinshaw reports. "The only drawback is that it can get pretty chilly."



"SUNDOWNERS" SCORE – Hard-to-come-by kills of Firebee maneuvering targets – scored with Sidewinder missiles over the Yuma, Arizona range – won recognition plaques for Lieutenants Joe Thompson (left) and Joe Satrapa, of Crusader squadron VF-111. The awards were made by Ryan Aeronautical Company, manufacturer of the targets used to sharpen air-to-air combat skills.



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VF-703 ON DUTY AT MIRAMAR – A really careful observer just might have detected a Texas flavor June 3 when pilots of VF-703 – one of three Naval Air Reserve fighter squadrons called up in January as a result of the Pueblo crisis – flew into NAS Miramar, California, from their home base at NAS Dallas.

As the Crusader drivers taxied up to their parking area, they extended the refueling probes of their F-8s and Texas flags popped out. A Navy band returned the "salute" with "Deep in the Heart of Texas," "The Eyes of Texas Are Upon You" and other selections deemed appropriate for the occasion. Texas-type hats replaced flight helmets as the pilots climbed out of their planes and displayed colorful cowboy boots.

"Miss San Diego" – Patti Ann Heigh-ton – greeted the arrivals from the Lone Star State and (photo) provided a boot removal "assist" for the squadron's skipper, Commander Frank (Fang) Liberato. The Texans then were officially welcomed by Captain Armistead B. Smith, the station's commanding officer. Also on hand were Captain S. W. Vejtasa, ComFairMiramar, and Commander Charles Cates, CO of Air Wing 16.



The Dallas squadron's transfer to Miramar involves about 25 officers and 150 men. Commander Liberato told California newsmen that six of VF-703's pilots have served in Vietnam, 12 are commercial pilots (eight from Braniff International), and six are LTV Aerospace Corporation engineers. Eight pilots have logged more than 1,000 hours each in Crusader cockpits. Lieutenant Commander Bruce Morehouse may reach the 3,000-hour mark within the next few months and Lieutenant Commander Wayne Williams is nearing the 2,000-hour mark.



VF-931, VF-661 MOVE TO CECIL FIELD – On duty at NAS Cecil Field, Florida, are VF-931 and VF-661, reserve Crusader squadrons transferred in May from their respective home bases at NAS Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, and the Naval Air Facility, Washington, D. C.

VF-931 is led by Commander Robert T. Hogan (left photo); VF-661's commanding officer is Commander Lemuel O. Warfield (right photo).

Also newly based at Cecil Field is VA-831, a reserve Skyhawk squadron shifted from NAS New York.





F-8 UNITS ON "MED" CRUISE - Photo reconnaissance pilots of Detachment 38 of VFP-63 have striking scenery to utilize as backgrounds as they continue a Mediterranean cruise aboard USS Shangri-La with (photos) Crusader fighter squadrons VF-13 and VF-62. VF-13 is led by Commander William J. Brandel, Jr., who relieved Commander Crawford A. Easterling last month as the carrier arrived at Barcelona, Spain. VF-62's skipper is Commander Donald L. Whitman. The VFP-63 detachment, headed by Lieutenant Commander Howard C. Mitchell, officer in charge, took these photos off the coast of Crete.



CAPTAIN PHILLIPS SERVES ON PANEL - Captain Billy Phillips, commanding officer of Readiness Attack Carrier Air Wing 4, NAS Cecil Field, Florida, was one of four panelists for a "Report by Vietnam Combat Pilots" when the annual meeting of the Aviation/Space Writers Association took place last month at Cocoa Beach, Florida.



"Interdiction in depth is the name of the Navy's game in Vietnam and this requires a tremendous reconnaissance effort because the targets are fleeting in nature," he told the assembled writers. "The Navy pilots flying from carriers are making an invaluable contribution to the air effort against North Vietnam. The North Vietnamese are hurting."



VFP-63 COMMAND CHANGES - In a change of command ceremony June 17 at NAS Miramar, Commander James L. Ellis relieved Commander Donald M. Hegrat as CO of VFP-63.



Commander Hegrat will report aboard USS Independence as navigation officer. Commander Ellis formerly served as executive officer of VFP-63; the new XO is Commander Ray L. Dunkin, previously attached to VF-124.

The photo squadron's new skipper has served aboard 18 carriers during the Navy career he began as an aviation cadet in 1949.

13TH, 14TH F-8 MIG KILLS SCORED – The 13th and 14th MIG kills credited to Crusader pilots during the air war over Vietnam have been scored by Commander Lowell R. "Moose" Myers, of VF-51, and Lieutenant Commander John B. Nichols, of VF-191.

Commander Myers, flying an F-8H from USS Bon Homme Richard, downed a MIG-21 with a Sidewinder missile in a 45-second battle over North Vietnam on June 26. Lieutenant Commander Nichols, flying an F-8E from USS Ticonderoga, shot down a MIG-17 with a Sidewinder and cannon fire in 90 seconds of action over enemy territory on July 9. Both pilots are veterans of more than 2,000 hours in Crusader cockpits.



VF-51 "TALLY HO!" – Commander "Moose" Myers (photo) and two other VF-51 pilots, Lieutenant John Quisenberry and Lieutenant Bert Harden, had flown an escort mission and refueled over the Gulf of Tonkin when they received a radio report of MIGs in the Vinh Son area.



The Crusader pilots headed back "over the beach." "We did a hard turn over Vinh Son," Lieutenant Quisenberry reported. "As we pulled around, Lieutenant Harden spotted two MIGs at two o'clock high and called 'Tally Ho!' Then Commander Myers called 'Tally Ho!' The MIGs saw us and dropped their fuel tanks for less weight and higher speed."

"We were at a lower altitude and saw the MIGs before they saw us," Commander Myers said. "We were coming at each other head-on but I was already maneuvering when my MIG first saw me. His speed caused him to fly right over me." As the enemy fighter passed overhead, the commander was midway into a hard turn that brought him into position to fire a Sidewinder up the other plane's tailpipe. After the explosion, he said, "the MIG's tail was completely gone. Flames were coming out of both wing roots as it went down."

Lieutenant Quisenberry said that "after the MIG was hit it did a roll and reversed and seemed to be coming back into the battle. I pulled up near him but before I shot at him I realized he was on fire. I saw the seat come out as the pilot ejected."

By that time, the second MIG had fled north. The VF-51 pilots headed east and returned to the "Bonnie Dick" in the Gulf of Tonkin.

CRUSADER



**FIGHTER
REPORT**

"EVERYTHING WORKED RIGHT" –
When Commander "Moose" Myers returned to USS Bon Homme Richard on June 26 after downing a MIG-21, Captain T. P. Dankworth, the carrier's commanding officer (photo), was among shipmates extending congratulations.



Handshaking and backslapping were the order of the day when other Carrier Air Wing 5 pilots crowded into VF-51's ready room to get details from the commander and Lieutenants John Quisenberry and Bert Harden.

Commander Myers had sighted MIGs before during his 181 combat missions but had never had an opportunity to tangle with one of the enemy fighters. "I've been training for it for 12 years and practiced it a thousand times if I've practiced it once," he said. "Everything worked out just right – the missile, the avionics, everything. John and Bert and I had rehearsed for it together a hundred times and it happened just the way we practiced for it. The important thing was that this was all business and we did it just right."

Commander Myers and the other "Screaming Eagles" of VF-51, home-based at NAS Miramar, California, were the first pilots to take the F-8H remanufactured model of the Crusader into action.



VF-191 PILOT DETAILS COMBAT ACTION – Lieutenant Commander John Nichols, of VF-191, was flying as fighter escort for an RF-8 photo-reconnaissance plane when he shot down a MIG-17 near Vinh on July 9.

"The photo plane was busy shooting pictures of post-bomb damage from an earlier strike when I sighted the MIG," he reported when he returned to USS Ticonderoga. "When I saw it on the tail of the photo plane, I told the pilot to break left. The MIG followed and I dropped in behind him and fired a couple of air-to-air missiles. The first one missed but the second one went right up his tailpipe. I saw a lot of big pieces of the MIG falling off. It slowed down rapidly and started smoking. Then I pulled up to within 300 feet of him and squeezed off a long burst of 20-millimeter cannon fire, knocking off more pieces."

The pilot of the photo plane, Lieutenant William R. Kocar, of VFP-63, "saw a big cloud of smoke coming from the MIG as it went into a spiral." Commander Charles L. Bush, flying an A-4 Skyhawk in the same area, watched the MIG go down and hit the ground.

Lieutenant Commander Nichols had never sighted a MIG before, except on radar, when he went into aerial combat while flying his 153rd mission over Vietnam. The mission was the last he had scheduled before completing his second combat tour and leaving the "Tico" on July 14 to return to his home base at NAS Miramar.

"I felt the 10 years I've been flying the F-8, the training, and being prepared for 90 seconds of combat all came into play," he said.

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DFC AWARDS MADE TO VFP-63 PILOTS – Photo reconnaissance flights over North Vietnam last year have won DFC awards for Commander Thomas D. Barrett, Officer-in-Charge of VFP-63's Detachment 11 during operations from USS Intrepid, and Lieutenant Philip K. Sherman, Jr., who served with Detachment 43 during operations from USS Coral Sea. Presentations were made at a change of command inspection at NAS Miramar on June 18 by Commander Donald M. Hegrat, who was relieved as skipper of the photo squadron by Commander James L. Ellis.

A Gold Star in lieu of the third Distinguished Flying Cross was presented to Commander Barrett for his part in an October 3 mission to obtain bomb damage assessment photos of the highway/railway bridge in the center of Haiphong immediately following a multi-air wing strike. Under heavy anti-aircraft artillery fire, he also evaded three SAM missiles to make "the vulnerable but necessary straight and level run over the target" and "continued to obtain photographic reconnaissance of other high interest targets before coasting out." The photos confirmed the success of the strike and provided additional intelligence data.



Commander Barrett, who has been transferred to COMNAVAIRPAC, also received the Silver Star Medal for a September 26 mission following a combined air strike against Haiphong transportation facilities. During the mission, an enemy shell hit the starboard wing of his photo Crusader, "exploded and completely severed most of the outer wing panel." He "elected to continue his mission despite his severely crippled aircraft" and warnings of impending SAM launches and of enemy aircraft in the immediate area. Coverage of the primary photo reconnaissance targets was obtained.

Lieutenant Sherman received the DFC for his part in a September 17 post-strike photo mission over Haiphong. When smoke rising from the highway/railway bridge target obscured the area for photo purposes, he "elected to orbit well within the range of three threatening SAM sites and several anti-aircraft batteries until a successful run could be made." He obtained bomb assessment damage coverage and then "elected to obtain photo coverage of the shipping in the harbor by flying a circuitous and extremely hazardous routing."



VF-211 SKIPPER RECORDS 500TH CRUSADER "TRAP" – Commander R. B.



Rutherford, commanding officer of the "Checkmates" of VF-211, recorded his 500th Crusader carrier landing last month during USS Hancock's operational readiness exercise off the California coast.

Fighter Squadron 211 garnered another distinction when Lieutenant (j.g.) Steve Lambert made the 109,000th arrested landing aboard the Hancock.

F-8 BUILDERS HEAR COMBAT REPORT – Crusaders in action in Vietnam, says Commander C. A. L. Swanson, are often "the first in" against "probably the most heavily defended of any targets in the world." And, adds the former skipper of the "Hunters" of VF-162 – veteran of 200 combat missions, including 171 in Crusaders – "there's a reason for it: the F-8 has the capability to get in, get out, and then function as cover."



Commander Swanson, now on duty at the Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River, Maryland, addressed F-8 remanufacturing program production workers July 11 at the plant of the Vought Aeronautics Division, LTV Aerospace Corporation. "Although the Crusader was originally designed as a pure fighter," he reported, "it had the growth potential to assume a dual role as a fighter-bomber and it makes a mighty fine bomber. It is also a wonderful dogfight airplane against airplanes and against missiles. You dogfight a missile as you do an aircraft and we had as many as 90 missiles fired at us in one day."



COMMANDER ISAACKS LEADS VF-24 – Command of VF-24 changed at NAS Miramar on July 12 when Commander Marion H. "Red" Isaacks relieved Commander David J. Ellison, ordered to report to the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.

Commander Isaacks previously served as executive officer of VF-24, joining the "Checkertails" in June, 1967, during the squadron's third combat deployment to Vietnam. While in action July 21, 1967, as leader of a flight of Crusaders protecting a strike group, he downed a MIG-17 with a Sidewinder.



The new CO began his Navy career in 1951 and is a veteran of combat during the Korean conflict.



VF-191 COMMAND CHANGES – The new skipper of VF-191 is Commander C. H. Tuomela, who has logged more than 5,000 hours in 52 models of aircraft – including extensive service as a Navy test pilot and two tours of combat duty in Korea – since he began flight training in 1948.

Commander Tuomela (left in photo) relieved Commander Donald D. Aldern during a change of command ceremony aboard USS Ticonderoga in the Gulf of Tonkin.

Commander Aldern, shown displaying a plaque presented to him by the squadron, will report to the Air War College, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama.



CRUSADER MIG KILL TALLY REACHES 16 – Pilots of the "Iron Angels" of VF-53 and the "Screaming Eagles" of VF-51 have boosted to 16 the number of MIG kills scored by Crusader pilots during the air war over Vietnam.

Commander Guy Cane, of VF-53, downed a MIG-17 with a "Sidewinder" air-to-air missile on July 29. A MIG-21 was shot down with "Sidewinders" on August 1 in an encounter with Lieutenant George Hise, of VF-53, and Lieutenant Norman McCoy, of VF-51.



"OLD-FASHIONED DOGFIGHT" – "It was just like a real old-fashioned World War I dogfight – there were F-8s and MIGs everywhere," said Commander Guy Cane, describing a five-minute aerial battle during which he shot down a MIG-17 over North Vietnam's southern panhandle region.

Commander Cane, executive officer of VF-53 (photo), and three other Crusader pilots flying from USS Bon Homme Richard were on combat air patrol over the Gulf of Tonkin on July 29 when they were dispatched on a MIG intercept mission.



"The MIGs were certainly aggressive," VF-53's XO said. "After we had been over land only a short time, we found them closer than we expected."

"I looked up to the right at two o'clock high and saw a single aircraft silhouetted against a cloud," said the commander's wingman, Lieutenant (j.g.) Dexter Manlove. "I called 'Tally Ho!' Then I saw there were two of them coming at us and we met head-on."

At that point, Lieutenant (j.g.) Charles L. Conrad spotted two more MIGs coming out of the clouds.

"Then," said Commander Cane, who was sighting MIGs for the first time in 186 combat missions, "the wild melee of four against four began. I went after one and fired a missile that detonated just short of his tailpipe. A chunk of his starboard wing came off and the MIG went into a nose-down, diving spiral. I turned my attention to my six o'clock to make sure there were no enemy aircraft there and when I looked back down I saw a huge fireball on the ground."

"The dogfight went on for about five minutes in a three-or-four-mile area," Lieutenant Conrad reported. "None of us got hit although all of us were under fire at one time or another."

The battle ended when the three remaining MIGs broke off and headed north. The Crusader pilots returned to the "Bonnie Dick."

CRUSADER



**FIGHTER
REPORT**

MIG-21 DOWNED – Crusader pilots of VF-53 and VF-51 teamed up in aerial combat August 1, when a MIG-21 was downed with "Sidewinders" 25 miles northwest of Vinh.

Lieutenant George Hise, of Fighter Squadron 53, damaged the MIG when his missile exploded just short of the aircraft, the Navy reported. "The MIG descended and headed north in an attempt to escape. Lieutenant Norman McCoy, of Fighter Squadron 51, then scored a direct hit with his missile, destroying the aircraft."



Back aboard USS Bon Homme Richard, Lieutenant McCoy and Lieutenant Hise (left center and right center in photo) were congratulated by Commander Guy Cane, of VF-53 (right), who had downed a MIG-17 on July 29, and Commander Lowell R. "Moose" Myers, of VF-51 (left), credited with a MIG-21 kill June 26. Other "Bonnie Dick" pilots extending congratulations included Commander William I. Parrish, skipper of the "Screaming Eagles" of VF-51, and Commander Harry R. Blake, skipper of the "Iron Angels" of VF-53.



HANDSHAKING IN ORDER –

Fellow pilots were assembled for ready room handshaking when Lieutenant Commander John B. Nichols III, of VF-191, returned to USS Ticonderoga on July 9 after downing a MIG-17.

The handshakers included Commander C. H. Tuomela (left in photo), skipper of "Satan's Kittens," and (background) Lieutenant (j.g.) D. E. Shoup.



Lieutenant Commander Nichols' MIG kill – scored with a "Sidewinder" and 20-millimeter cannon fire – was the 14th credited to Crusader pilots over Vietnam and the first credited to a pilot flying from USS Ticonderoga.

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FOUR VF-111 PILOTS WIN DFC – Distinguished Flying Crosses for combat action over North Vietnam last year have been awarded to Commander Jack L. Finney, commanding officer of VF-111, and three other "Sundowners" pilots, Lieutenant Commander Richard W. Schaffert, Lieutenant Carl G. Stattin and Lieutenant (j.g.) John E. Laughter.

The presentations were made at NAS Miramar, California, by Rear Admiral E. G. Fairfax, Commander ASW Group 5, who served as skipper of VF-111 during World War II combat action in 1944 and 1945.

Commander Finney (right in photo with Admiral Fairfax) received the DFC for participation in strikes against the Phuc Yen airfield and the Hanoi thermal powerplant during VF-111's deployment aboard USS Oriskany. He also received the Navy Commendation Medal for participation in a strike against the Phyl Ly railroad yard and playing an instrumental role in the rescue of a pilot downed near Hanoi.



Lieutenant Commander Schaffert received one DFC award for locating, "despite heavy enemy resistance," the position of a downed pilot subsequently rescued south of Hanoi and another award for "Iron Hand" escort missions against the Hanoi/Phuc Yen complex. Lieutenant Stattin was decorated for completing a mission against the Phuc Yen airfield after his Crusader had been damaged by a surface-to-air missile. Lieutenant Laughter received his DFC for participation in escorting SAM suppression aircraft over Hanoi.



OTHER "SUNDOWNERS" DECORATED – For participation in a strike during which 38 SAMs were fired at aircraft attacking targets in Hanoi, Lieutenant Commander Richard A. Peters, of VF-111, has received his 12th Air Medal award.

The Navy Commendation Medal was awarded to Lieutenant Harding J. Meadows III for suppression of coastal battery gunfire during the rescue of a downed pilot, to Lieutenant John D. Sande for completing a rescue combat patrol mission although his F-8 had been hit by enemy anti-aircraft artillery fire, and to Lieutenant Robert A. Jacobson for his part in destruction of a SAM missile site.

Lieutenant (j.g.) Gordon N. Moffett received the Navy Achievement Medal for his accomplishments in collecting and evaluating combat intelligence for the "Sundowners" during deployment aboard USS Oriskany.



2,000-HOUR AWARDS SLATED – Pilots who have logged 2,000 hours in Crusader cockpits will receive plaques during the 12th annual Tailhook Reunion, September 20-22 in Las Vegas. Any qualified pilot who has not been contacted in an intensive effort to locate all new 2,000-hour F-8 drivers should present his logbook total to his CO for forwarding of his nomination to a Vought Aeronautics Division, LTV Aerospace Corporation representative or to Fighter Report.

ADMIRAL STROH BECOMES 19TH "GRAY EAGLE" – Rear Admiral Robert J. Stroh, Commander Fleet Air Jacksonville, is the Navy's 19th "Gray Eagle" – the officer still on active duty who holds the earliest date of designation as a Naval Aviator.

Admiral Stroh (left in photo) received the Gray Eagle Award trophy from Vice Admiral A. S. Heyward, Jr., who was retiring as Chief of Naval Air Training.

The trophy is sponsored by LTV Aerospace Corporation. J. R. Clark (right in photo), vice president and general manager, Vought Aeronautics Division, participated in the transfer to the new holder.

Admiral Stroh was designated a Naval Aviator in 1932. He became the 19th Gray Eagle during a retirement and change of command ceremony at NAS Pensacola on July 31, when Admiral Heyward was relieved as Chief of Naval Air Training by Vice Admiral Bernard M. Strean.



VF-124 GETS FIRST F-8J – The first F-8J remanufactured Crusader assigned to an operational squadron is flying with VF-124, NAS Miramar.

The aircraft was flown from Dallas to "Fightertown" by Commander Robert S. Chew, skipper of the "Crusader College" squadron.

F-8Js are being remanufactured from the original F-8Es as part of a Navy program extending to 1975 the service life of the Crusader, operational with the fleet since 1957.

"FAIREST OF THE FAIR" – Posing prettily with a model of the Crusader during the Southern California Exposition is Miss Mary Lambertson – "The Fairest of the Fair."

The one-tenth-scale F-8E model was the centerpiece of the NAS Miramar portion of the Pacific Naval Air Force exhibit at the Del Mar fairgrounds, where 396,000 visitors were counted during the 12-day exposition.





CRUSADER



FIGHTER REPORT

VF-24, VF-211 POUND SUPPLY ROUTES – Back in action over North Vietnam, pounding enemy supply routes and storage areas in the southern panhandle region, are Crusader squadrons VF-24, led by Commander Marion H. "Red" Isaacks, and VF-211, led by Commander Ralph B. Rutherford.

"Checkertails" pilots of VF-24 (photo) and "Checkmates" pilots of VF-211 are serving with Carrier Air Wing 21 and flying from USS Hancock, which launched the initial strikes of her fourth Vietnam cruise on August 23.

Lieutenant Phil Dempewolf has been credited with making the 111,000th arrested landing aboard the "Hanna."

Lieutenant (jg) Paul E. Swigart, also of VF-24, was the pilot launched for the carrier's 100,000th "cat" shot.



2,000-HOUR F-8 PILOTS HONORED – Newest names on the roster of pilots who have logged 2,000 hours in Crusader cockpits are those of Commander Ralph B. Rutherford, commanding officer of VF-211, and Commander E. J. Hickey, Jr. and Lieutenant J. L. Unruh, of VF-124, NAS Miramar, California.

The additions to the roster were announced during the 12th annual Tailhook Reunion, September 20–22 in Las Vegas. Commander Rutherford's 2,000-hour plaque will be forwarded to him aboard USS Hancock in the Gulf of Tonkin.



VF-111 DETACHMENT ABOARD INTREPID – Detachment 11 of VF-111, led by Lieutenant Commander W. K. "Dusty" Rhodes as officer in charge, is operating with Carrier Air Wing 10 from USS Intrepid, "on the line" at Yankee Station off North Vietnam.

TEXANS WELCOME "GOOD LUCK CHARM" - When "Miss Texas - U.S.A." arrived in San Diego one day last month, it wasn't just coincidence that the transplanted Texans of Fighter Squadron 703 happened to be at Lindbergh Field at the time.



"She has been our good luck charm, and we wanted to show her a real Texas welcome," Commander Frank Liberato, skipper of the Crusader squadron, told newsmen.

VF-703 pilots who assisted Commander Liberato in extending Lone Star State style greetings to Miss Judy Bowman included (at right in photo) Lieutenant W. S. "Dub" Fields, Lieutenant Commander P. J. Smith and Lieutenant Commander Wayne Williams.

Miss Bowman, who had reigned as queen of the Naval Air Reserve squadron before it was transferred from NAS Dallas to NAS Miramar, California, was on the West Coast to participate in a beauty pageant. The Mariachi Guadalajara band of San Diego was on hand at the airport to strike up "Deep in the Heart of Texas," and VF-703 took over from there.



"TICO" PILOTS RETURN FROM VIETNAM - Crusader pilots of VF-191, VF-194 and Detachment 14 of VFP-63 flew into NAS Miramar on August 16, returning to their home base after Vietnam combat duty with USS Ticonderoga.

The "Satan's Kittens" of VF-191 were led by Commander Clyde H. Tuomela and the "Red Lightnings" of VF-194 by Commander Robert E. Roberts. Lieutenant Commander John R. Nork was officer in charge of the VFP-63 detachment.

The Crusader pilots served as part of Carrier Air Wing 19 aboard the "Tico," commanded by Captain Norman K. McInnis, during her fourth tour of duty on Yankee Station.



CENTURION AWARD - Commander Harry R. Blake (right), skipper of the "Iron Angels" of VF-53, is among squadron pilots who have received Centurion awards in recognition of 100 arrested landings aboard USS Bon Homme Richard.

Captain T. P. Dankworth (left), commanding officer of the "Bonnie Dick," also presented awards to Lieutenant Commander James E. Tucker, Lieutenant Commander James E. Taylor, and Lieutenants (jg) Charles L. Conrad and Steven K. Russ.



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SKIPPERS GET MIG KILL DETAILS – Briefings for their skippers were in order when two Crusader pilots returned to USS Bon Homme Richard on August 1 after an aerial encounter during which a MIG-21 was downed over North Vietnam. Left photo: Lieutenant Norman McCoy, of VF-51, and his skipper, Commander William I. Parrish. Right photo: Lieutenant George Hise, of VF-53, and his CO, Commander Harry R. Blake.

"The MIG fired a missile at Lieutenant Hise, but it missed," Lieutenant McCoy reported. "I knew we were fat then because the MIG turned to the right and we were both in a position to chase him." With the enemy aircraft "boxed in," Lieutenant Hise fired a Sidewinder which "nicked" and damaged the MIG. Lieutenant McCoy's Sidewinder detonated at the wing root and destroyed the North Vietnamese plane.



VF-51 COMMAND CHANGES – The new skipper of the "Screaming Eagles" of VF-51 is Commander John M. Altmeyer, who relieved Commander William I. Parrish in a change of command ceremony August 20 aboard USS Bon Homme Richard.

Commander Parrish has been assigned to duty as executive officer of VF-124, the Crusader training squadron at NAS Miramar.

Commander Altmeyer, former executive officer of VF-51, previously attended the Naval War College and then served as a member of the college staff.



NEW CO REPORTS TO AIR WING 5 – Commander Albert A. Schaufelberger assumed command of Carrier Air Wing 5 in a ceremony August 24 aboard USS Bon Homme Richard. Crusader components of the air wing are VF-51, VF-53 and Detachment 31 of VFP-63.

Commander Schaufelberger (photo) relieved Commander David Bruce Miller, veteran of 242 combat missions over Vietnam, who has been assigned to the staff of the Chief of Naval Operations. The new skipper joined the air wing after a tour of duty at Naval Air Systems Command Headquarters. Previously, during deployment in Southeast Asia, he flew more than 170 combat missions.



VFP-63 PETTY OFFICERS DECORATED - Meritorious service with Detachment 34 of VFP-63 during Vietnam combat deployment aboard USS



Oriskany has won the Navy Achievement Medal for Chief Aviation Electronics Technician Loye F. Kelley, Aviation Structural Mechanic First Class James G. McCann and Aviation Machinist's Mate Third Class Manuel M. Sanchez.

The awards to Chief Petty Officer Kelley, Petty Officer McCann and Petty Officer Sanchez (left to right in photo) were presented at NAS Miramar by Commander James L. Ellis, commanding officer of the Crusader photo

squadron. The citations noted the contributions made by the medal winners to Detachment 34's high degree of aircraft availability during combat operations from July 14, 1967, to January 12, 1968.

COMMANDER HUBBARD LEADS VF-62 - Commander Samuel W. Hubbard, Jr. has assumed command of VF-62 at NAS Cecil Field, Florida, relieving Commander Donald L. Whitman (left in photo), assigned to duty in Washington, D.C.

The August 12 change of command ceremony followed the squadron's return from deployment to the Mediterranean aboard USS Shangri-La. Other Crusader units returning were VF-13, led by Commander William J. Brandel, Jr., and Detachment 38 of VFP-63, led by Lieutenant Commander Howard C. Mitchell.



Commander Hubbard joined VF-62 as executive officer after being graduated from the command and staff course at the Naval War College. Previous service included Vietnam combat duty with VF-154, flying from USS Coral Sea.



COMMANDER BRANDEL HEADS VF-13 - Commander William J. Brandel, Jr., who assumed command of VF-13 during the squadron's "Med" cruise aboard USS Shangri-La, had served previously as administrative officer and as executive officer.

During his Navy career he has received his M.S. degree in aeronautics and astronautics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and has attended the Naval Justice School at Newport, Rhode Island, and the Armed Forces Staff College, Norfolk, Virginia.