

Helicopter pioneer is recalled

By JO1 (AW) Barbara Welk

The Compass

NORTH ISLAND — A memorial service was held at 3 p.m. Wednesday for retired Navy Captain William R. Stuyvesant, a distinguished naval aviator, at the air station chapel.

"Bill showed us, every day of his life, that being a helicopter pilot in the U.S. Navy was the best job to have," said Rear Admiral J. Scott Walker, commander, Naval Base San Diego, during his remarks at the memorial. "Bill will always be remembered as a dedicated father, loving husband and ambassador of rotary-wing aviation who was one of the founding fathers of the Naval Helicopter Association."

"Mr. Helicopter," a nickname Capt. Stuyvesant earned because of his passion for flying them, died Feb. 2, at the age of 69, from complications following surgery.

He was designated a naval aviator in February 1947, and was accepted into the newly-created Aviation Midshipman Program. Capt. Stuyvesant was the seventh person to be designated a 'Flying Midshipman' at the end of World War II. A few months later, he was assigned to a San Diego-based carrier fighter squadron flying



The Compass photo / Scott Niquette

Retired Navy Captain M.L. Reynolds recalls some humorous anecdotes about his life with Capt. William Stuyvesant at a memorial ceremony.

the F8F Bearcat and earning the princely sum of \$68 per month base pay and \$34 flight pay. His assignment to San Diego made him the first Flying Midshipman to be assigned to a Pacific Fleet squadron.

Following several squadron tours and deployments flying the Bearcat and then early jet fighters, he was among the first Navy men who volunteered for a relatively new type of aircraft; the helicopter.

Designated a helicopter pilot in 1952, he flew almost all of the Navy's earlier helicopters. In the 22 years that followed, he flew 59 different aircraft, amassing over 4000 flight hours.

Capt. Stuyvesant retired from the Navy in 1974 with 31 years of active duty. He then moved to Connecticut to work with Siko-

rsky Aircraft, a helicopter manufacturer. The company transferred him to Coronado in 1984, naming him West Coast manager. He remained with Sikorsky aircraft for 16 years.

Capt. Stuyvesant was active in the Naval Helicopter Association, which he helped form, and served as chairman of the board of directors. He was also a member of the Tailhook Association, the Association of Naval Aviation, and the Marine Corps Aviation Association.

Capt. Stuyvesant is survived by his wife of 48 years, Betty; three daughters, Patricia Crossno of San Marcos, Susan Jamison of Pensacola, Fla., Mary Stuyvesant of Los Angeles; one son, Lieutenant Commander Joseph Stuyvesant of Alexandria, Va.; and seven grandchildren.