

Tackrabbits to Jets



Centennial Edition

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Acknowledgements

“Jackrabbits to Jets: Centennial Edition” is the history of Naval Air Station North Island (NASNI) as told by the people who served there over the last 100 years.

The original version of *Jackrabbits to Jets*, published in 1967 for NASNI's 50th anniversary, was a result of efforts by the North Island Historical Committee, headed by Station Administrative Officer Cmdr. H. C. Hollandsworth. The committee included Elretta Sudsbury, writer/ editor; LT.j.g. Stella Ellis, associate editor; W.E. Curtis, illustrator; Journalist Chief Petty Officer Charles Nelson, Journalist Chief Petty Officer Henkemeyer, and Louise Bidwell. France Carpentier completed the layout and designed the cover art for the first edition.

The North Island Historical Committee of 1967 could not have completed the ambitious project of researching and writing the 50-year history of NASNI without extensive help. Generous gratitude was given to old-timers who gave firsthand accounts of events, to historians who provided material to help with the book, and to the hundreds who loaned or donated priceless photographs which helped “picture” North Island as it was in the past. Special thanks went to Adrian O. Van Wuen who provided numerous documents and photographs, and to Stanley Norris who identified and captioned photographs. Lee M. Pearson provided guidance and helped obtain the BUAER Newsletters, BUAER Annual Reports, and other official documents which served as a framework for much of the early period.

Capt. M.T. Seligman (USN ret.), a former NASNI Executive Officer motivated the original committee to begin the project almost six years before the 50th anniversary. Without his belief that such an undertaking would be a contribution to the Navy and his help in getting it started, the book might never have been written. The services of the following institutions were invaluable to the production of the original book: the National Archives; the Federal Records Center at Bell, California; The Chief of Naval Operations Archives; the Biographies Branch of the Navy Department; the McClelland Air Force Base Historical Office; the San Diego Aerospace Museum; the Historical Collection of Title Insurance and Trust Company; Serra Museum; and the San Diego Union Tribune.

Numerous Navy, Marine Corps and Army service-members and civilians made their memories, mementos, and files available for use. Some wrote firsthand accounts which were valuable in recreating the very early days. Among these were some NASNI plank owners; Donald H. Bates, Edward S. Brainard, Harry A. Brown, Arthur C. Campbell, Francis H. Fuller, Archie Fawver, Joe R. Forkner, J. Sterling Halstead, J. L. Locke, Earl A. Phillips, Charles W. Tuttle, F. C. Urban, Aldred K. Warren, Jr., Glenn Walker, and Ivan B. Wright.

Others who provided extensive help through research, firsthand accounts and other services were: Mrs. Ernest C. Adams; Rear Adm. M. E. Arnold, (USN ret.); Chief Petty Officer Charles C. Bucey (USN ret.); Chief Warrant Officer M. Fisher (USMC ret.); Major George E. A. Hallet, (USA ret.); D.D. Hatfield; H. L. Hayward; Adm. John H. Hoover (USN ret.); Paul W. Marvin; Major Carl Merz, (USMC ret.) Cmdr. John R. McCants, (USMC ret.) Howard E. Morin; Lt. A.D. Sikes, USN; Major James E. Snow (USMC ret.); William V. Stewart; Alfred V. Verville; Chief Petty Officer Comer Vincent (USN ret.) Vice Adm. Frank T. Ward (USN ret.) Mrs. Frank T. Ward, Waldo D. Waterman and Frank Ledet.

The second edition of *Jackrabbits to Jets* was published for NASNI's Diamond Anniversary through the efforts of NASNI's *Jackrabbits to Jets* Committee chartered by Commanding Officer Capt. Theodore C. Sexton. He believed continuing to share the history of the birthplace of Naval Aviation was a worthy endeavor and provided his full support to the committee, headed by NASNI Administrative Officer and Managing Editor Lt Cmdr. Marcia Van Wye. The committee included Lt. Paul F. McCarthy, who served as the overall project coordinator and associate editor; Mr. Frank C. Ilderton, Jr. and Mrs. Toni J. Ellington of the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Department, who provided contracting, marketing and sales support along with editing and illustrating assistance; Ms. Joan E. Walter, NASNI paralegal, who provided legal advice; and Mr. Kenneth D. Mitchell of the Public Affairs Office, who provided research assistance.

Many individuals made valuable contributions to the book. The first draft of Acknowledgements -- Then and Now, PART III, and chronology were written by Ensign Michael D. Rapp, and edited by Lt. Cmdr. Van Wye, Lt. McCarthy, and Mrs. Ellington. The original Preface and Epilogue were revised by Lt Cmdr. Jill H. Votaw, while performing two weeks active reserve training. Research was conducted by Lt. McCarthy, Ensign Rapp, Lt. Cmdr. Votaw and Mr. John Heath. Cmdr. Neil W. Clements, Lt j.g. Amy Y. Dahlen, Ms. Sharon Nelson, and Mr. Fred S. Wilson provided technical and research assistance.

The illustrations for PART III were designed by Mr. Dave Arenas and Ms. Carla V. Powell. Ms. Powell also designed the dust jacket. Ms. Gloria D. Kelly was responsible for bid solicitation, and Mr. Tony L. Jose for book funding assistance. Photographic assistance was provided by Journalist First Class Cheryl R. Gardiner and Journalist Third Class Traci L. Coviello. Cmdr. John R. Hayes, Officer in Charge of the Navy Exchange provided pricing and distribution assistance. Word Processing was provided by Mrs. Patricia A. Calloway and Mrs. Kimberly J. Farrell.

Additional contribution was made by Mr. Owen J. Jones, Mrs. Rhoda H. Newton, and Mrs. Patricia E. Osborne who provided valuable review and comment on the first drafts of all sections of the book that were revised. Also, Mr. Edwin D. McKellar and Mrs. Mary L. Scott of the San Diego Aerospace Museum graciously opened the doors of the research library and provided valuable assistance in obtaining photographs.

When planning began for NASNI's Centennial Celebration, it was decided that a third edition of "Jackrabbits to Jets", would be part of the base's celebrations. Joan Walter, the only member of the staff who had been part of earlier editions, was made the "Jackrabbits to Jets" committee chair. The committee decided to completely restructure the book and update each decade with information that was not as easily available during earlier editions of the historical account as well as adding entirely new information for the last twenty-five years. Also included in this edition are "Sea Stories", first-hand accounts of events, told by the Sailors, Marines and Civilians who served aboard NASNI during the last 100 years.

Special thanks to Capt. Shawn "Shrek" Malone who helped the committee gather "Sea Stories" and historical accounts to document the last twenty-five years. Cameron Carlomagno, Naval Base Coronado's intern, who cataloged all the records used to create this account. Aviation Metalsmith Second Class Petty Officer Destini Hall who copy-edited chapters of the book while in labor with her first child, Kennedy Noori. Leslie Crawford who researched and provided many of the photos in this edition. Jim John who has been at AIOPS for much of NASNI's history shared his records and photos. Michael Rhodes at the Navy History and Heritage Command who spent months digitizing records and performing searches.

This edition of the book would not have been possible without careful documentation by the Navy's story-tellers. The Public Affairs officers who published press releases, the journalists, photographers mates, draftsmen, litographers who in 2007 rates which became the Mass Communication Specialist in 2007- without your documentations and imagery, the Navy story would not live on. Thank you for putting yourselves in harms way to document the history of our service.

The many writers and editors who touched each edition of the book have done our utmost to ensure accuracy however, errors may exist and we encourage you to reach out to the committee and let us know so that future editions can be as accurate as possible.

Preface

NASNI celebrated “a century of service” Nov. 8, 2017. Since 1967, two previous editions of “Jackrabbits to Jets” were published through the dedication of the now defunct North Island Historical Society.

The first edition commemorated NASNI’s golden anniversary and took the group of dedicated volunteers nearly six years to complete. Only 12,000 copies were printed and by the Diamond Jubilee anniversary, numerous requests were made for a second edition. In 1992, the second edition of “Jackrabbits to Jets” was republished with minimal changes, to preserve the spirit and character of the original text, and to respect the good work accomplished by the North Island Historical Committee.

The “Jackrabbits to Jets: Centennial Edition” published as part of NASNI Centennial celebrations, includes a significant restructuring of the book, breaking down the history of the installation by decade and includes new imagery and information that was not as easily accessible during earlier editions of the historical account as well as never published information detailing the last twenty-five years. Also included in this edition are “Sea Stories”, first-hand accounts of events, told by the Sailors, Marines and Civilians who served aboard NASNI during the last 100 years.

NASNI has been marked by change from its beginning. Perhaps the land is still the same, deep beneath the reinforced concrete and asphalt, but the passing years have erased most signs of what was once called “North Coronado Island.” Gone are Fort Pio Pico, Marine Camp Howard, the Curtis Aviation School and Camp Trouble, yet all are part of the NASNI story.

There are buildings still in use today, built by the Army and Navy as early as 1918 standing next to state-of-art environmentally friendly structures that are testament to the Navy’s stewardship of our natural resources. Streets, buildings and other areas are stamped forever with the names of men and women who played significant roles in creating today’s Navy: Admiral Halsey Field, Andrew Mills Hall, McCain Boulevard, Lowry Theater, Vice Admiral Martin Fitness Center, Towers Sea Cabin, and Stroop Field are but a few that carry our history into the future. The Spanish Bight which once provided a protected area for seaplane experiments is now covered with concrete and topped with buildings. West Beach and North Beach grew by tideland fill as the channel into San Diego Bay was deepened and widened to accommodate the larger ships of the modern Navy and Merchant Marine Fleets. Where once the terrain was sand and brush land, trees planted by the ecology-minded of the 20s and before have flourished to form an oasis on the island that is no longer an island.

Jet powered airplanes and helicopters replaced the wood, wire and fabric land planes which floated in the still air like box kites over NASNI. Flying boats and amphibians were replaced by a new breed of anti-submarine aircraft. More than 60 years ago, helicopters assumed the work of the observation planes used by battleships and cruisers. Young aviators who flew in San Diego during the early years are long since retired or gone. Many, rest upon the cross-stubbed hill at Fort Rosecrans which looks down upon NAS North Island.

The days of multi-colored airplanes and squadrons with names such as “High Hats,” “Felix the Cat,” “Ace of Spades,” and “Red Rippers” have passed, leaving their mark upon aviation for years to come. They have been replaced by the “Screwbirds,” “Magicians,” “Battlecats,” and “Eightballers” of today. The F/A-18 Hornet, worked on at the Naval Aviation Depot, evolved from the Sopwith Camel, F-5-L, F2B, and others which swept through the sky over NASNI since the days of the Curtiss A-1. These models helped to shape the aircraft of today and those yet to be designed. The Naval Aviators of today, clad in flame resistant nomex flight suits, who navigate San Diego skies would not be here today without the fliers in leather helmets, goggles and silk scarves who opened the skies to the Golden Wings. The USS Carl Vinson (CVN 70) and USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71) sit sentinel where their predecessors once reigned supreme.

In 1967, “Jackrabbits to Jets” tried to recreate the nostalgia of the days that are gone, and to stop the clock for a close view of NASNI in its Golden Anniversary year. The 1992 edition attempted to resurrect with as few changes as possible the work accomplished by the North Island Historical Committee and provided an admittedly limited overview of events between 1967 and 1992.

With the release of “Jackrabbits to Jets: Centennial Edition” the volunteer writers and editors have sought to capture a “century of service” through the observations of the men and women who served aboard the “birthplace of Naval Aviation” and hope that you find the history as enlightening as we did.

Jackrabbits to Jets: Centennial Edition *Committee*

Sandy Duchac (writer/editor)

MC1 Travis Alston (photo editor/ writer)

Cmdr. (ret) John Ball (writer/ contributor)

Leslie Crawford (photo editor/ researcher)

AM2 Destini Hall (copy-editor/ photo editor)

MC3 Anthony Hilkowski (photo editor)

MC1 (ret) Krishna Jackson (contributor)

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Capt. Shawn Malone (contributor)

MC2 Samantha Montengro (photo editor)

Capt. (reti) Bill Personius (contributor)

Lt. Ruth Roberson (editor)

Cmdr. Dan "Millhouse" Vogel (contributor)

Joan Walter Committee Chair/writer

Lt. Cmdr. Evan Wolfe (editor)

MCC Jeremy Woods (photo editor/ writer)

Saluting a Century of Service



Rear Adm. Grace Hopper breaks ground on The Grace Hopper Data Center aboard NASNI. Circa 1985.

June 10, 1983

The Pizza Pub opens and offers on-station delivery. It is still in operation today.

Jan. 1985

The child care facility is remodeled and modernized by public works staff.

Summer 1985

Paramount Pictures films "Top Gun" throughout NASNI using Navy Sailors as extras.

Nov. 30, 1988

The Air Terminal reopens after renovations. During the remodel, air terminal business was conducted from temporary tents.

Dec. 5, 1988

The Sea 'N' Air Golf Course Clubhouse opens and offers patrons the same amenities as a private club.



A Kamen UH-2A of Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron (light) 31 (HSL-31) flies towards NASNI. Circa 1981.

NASNI Commanding Officers:



Capt. Warren E. Aut

Apr. 20, 1979 - Aug 19, 1981



Capt. Robert B. Watts

Aug. 19, 1981 - Aug. 3, 1983



Capt. Russel N. Blatt

Aug. 3, 1983 - June 26, 1985



Capt. Buddie J. Penn

June 26, 1985 - June 26, 1987



Capt. David L. Harlow

June 26, 1987 - Feb. 17, 1989

1980 - 1989

NAS North Island modernization

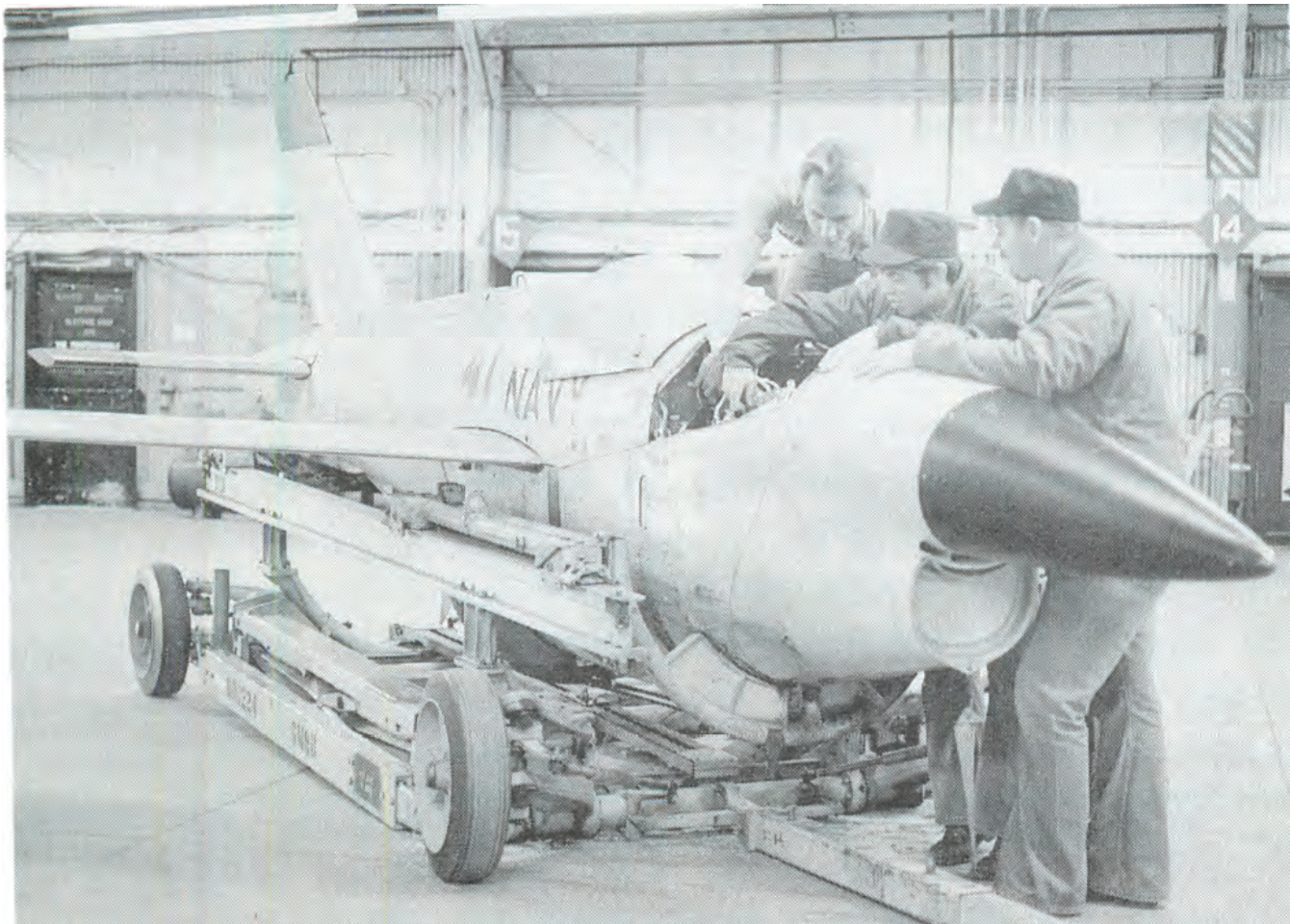
In December 1980, the Personnel Support Detachment (PSD) found a permanent home near the VS-41 Administration building, where it still resides today. The combining of pay records, service records, and other services performed by PSD under one roof improved responsiveness to servicemembers' needs, increased efficiency, and reduced errors.

On Wednesday, August 25, 1982, the station library opened for business in building 650, after 8,700 man hours of labor. Of those hours, 7,900 were accomplished through the station's Seabee active and reserve self-help crews.

The library project, started in February 1982, was in the planning stages for nearly 10 years. Ever since the building of the new barracks along McCain Boulevard in the early 1970s, there were plans to consolidate the library from two separate locations to a more convenient spot for barracks residents.

The Seabee's completed demolition in the spaces at building 650, did concrete work, put in a new ceiling and walls, worked on the entrance, built shelves, and did all the electrical wiring and finishing work. Besides saving thousands of dollars, the self-help project provided the crew with valuable on-the-job training.

The self-help crew, headed by BU1 Charles Barry, completed the task with only twenty permanently



VC-3 personnel repairing a drone

assigned personnel plus four or five temporaries at any given time.

Another project begun in February 1983 came to fruition on June 10 of the same year. Recreational Services opened the Pizza Pub, located on McCain Boulevard. At the time of its opening, the Pizza Pub boasted on-station free delivery between 4:30 and 10:00 p.m., and a friendly atmosphere accentuated by turn-of-the-century high-backed booths.

On January 20, 1984, building 614 where the Pizza Pub was located, was named the Joseph Durr Recreation Center in honor of EN1 Joseph Durr who was stationed at NAS North Island from January 1978 to November 1981. EN1 Durr lost his life saving a shipmate from a gas explosion on board the USS BAINBRIDGE in January 1982. While stationed at NAS North Island, he was the prime mover in numerous station beautification projects, to include the establishment of the fifty-state flag display at the McCain Boulevard traffic circle.



SH-60B "Seahawk"



"Flag circle" traffic circle at McCain Blvd.



A C2-A Greyhound logistics aircraft makes an arrested landing aboard the aircraft carrier USS Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69). U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist Seaman Zach Sleeper/Released

Target drones fade away

Fleet Composite Squadron Three (VC-3) faded into naval history September 30, 1981, as its decommissioning ended 41 years of service to surface and air units of the Atlantic and Pacific Fleets. Replaced by civilian contractors, VC-3 provided air and ground launched target services for the Navy and Marine Corps.

Home based at NAS North Island from 1965 to 1981, VC-3 was originally commissioned as VJ-3 in 1939.

The squadron was briefly decommissioned from 1947 to 1948 and reestablished as VC-3 at NAS Santa Ana. VC-3 had several other homes, including NAS Miramar, NAS Barbers Point, and NAS Brown Field.

Known as the "Drone Rangers," VC-3 was a pioneer in the development, evaluation, and use of remotely controlled target aircraft, or "drones." During "drone" history, squadron personnel went from operating low flying N2C biplanes at 100 miles per hour to drones capable of 1000 miles per hour and altitudes of over 60,000 feet.

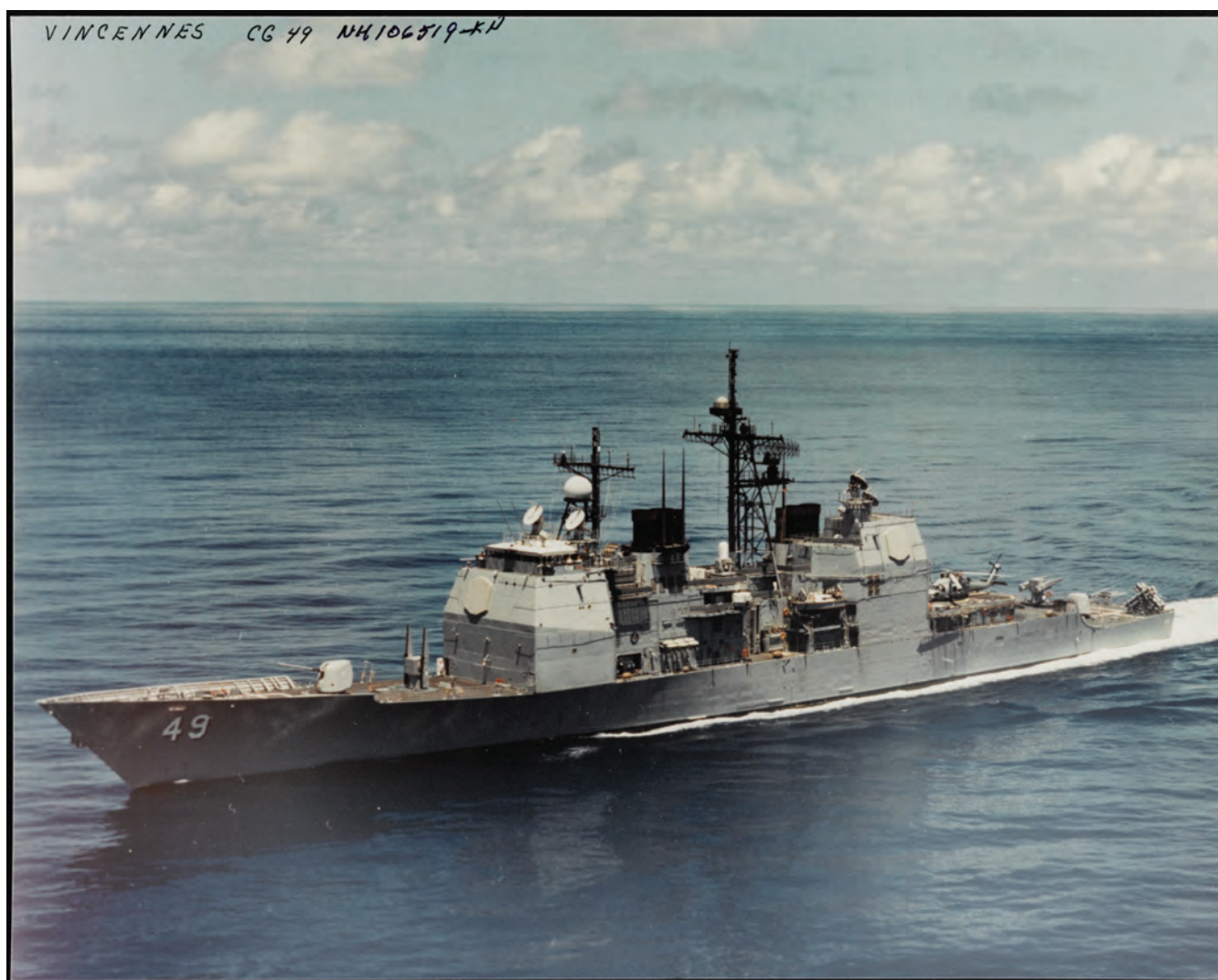
The 25 officers and 185 enlisted members of VC-3 operated three DC-130A "Hercules" aircraft and three types of drones. The Hercules served as launch platforms for the B2M-34 "Firebee" I and II target vehicles. Additionally, the squadron operated and maintained the ground launched target M2M-74C drone "Chukar."

Modern platforms for a modern Navy

In January 1983, the SH-60B “Seahawk” arrived in the fleet. In order to accommodate the new helicopter, the Navy established HSL-41 at NAS North Island to act as the LAMPS MARK III Air System Fleet Readiness Squadron, providing training for replacement aircrew and maintenance personnel. HSL-41 trained pilots and aircrew for the west coast HSL squadrons in San Diego, Hawaii, and Japan.

HSL-41 was redesignated from Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron Light 41 to Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 41 December 8, 2006,. Helicopter Maritime Strike Squadron 41 (HSM 41) is the Navy’s Fleet Replacement Squadron dedicated to training new MH-60R pilots and aircrew.

In February 2008, HSM-41 surpassed 140,000 flight hours without a major aircraft incident and celebrated its 25th anniversary. Since 1983, HSM-41 has trained over 3,000 Fleet Replacement Pilots and Aircrew for service in LAMPS MK III and MH-60R fleet squadrons. In 2013, the squadron reached 170,000 flight hours without a major incident.



USS Vincennes (CG-49) At sea, on a calm day in June 1986. Official U.S. Navy Photograph, from the collections of the Naval History and Heritage Command.

North Island on the big screen

by Commander (retired) John C. Ball

*H*ollywood filmmakers have been coming to North Island for 90 of its 100 years. Aviation, and particularly its pilots, was an exciting part of American life in the early decades of the 20th century. Aviators were daredevils and risk-takers, and flying was a thrilling new adventure packed with excitement and the risk of sudden death. After Charles Lindbergh's famous solo flight to Paris in 1927, flying captured the imagination of the entire nation, and Hollywood was quick to cash in on the action. The first Hollywood film crew arrived at North Island in 1928. The air station was already the home of West Coast naval air power, with Navy and Marine squadrons and the first big aircraft carriers. Here filmmakers could capture live-action flying scenes during fleet maneuvers, harrowing dives, and carrier landings. It's no wonder that Hollywood was drawn to the naval air station to use as a stage for thrills and drama. The air station was located reasonably close to Hollywood, nearby was the comfortable Hotel del Coronado, and the Navy was willing to provide its support in return for publicity to audiences far and wide.

The films made at North Island are in a sense an exciting visual record of its first 90 years, from fragile biplanes, to screaming dive bombers, through World War II and Korea and Vietnam, to today. These movies contain priceless views of airplanes that now are only in museums, ships that were sunk or scrapped, and aviators and sailors and marines who are no longer with us.



Planes fly in formation above NAS San Diego in 1929. Official U.S. Navy Photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives.



Three U.S. Navy Boeing F2B-1 fighters that made up the 1928 U.S. Navy aerobatics team called The Three Sea-hawks. Official U.S. Navy Photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives.

The Flying Fleet

The Flying Fleet. MGM. Director: George W. Hill. Stars: Ramon Navarro, Ralph Graves, Anita Page. Silent. Release: January 19, 1929.

This is the first big Hollywood production filmed at North Island. Produced near the end of the silent film era, the 87-minute film is silent with occasional music and sound effects. It stars the handsome heartthrob of the day, Ramon Navarro, dashing in his naval uniforms. Most of the cast and crew were housed at the nearby Hotel del Coronado, where several scenes were filmed.

The film follows six midshipmen upon graduation from Annapolis, through a year in the fleet, then on to flight training at Pensacola. Three wash out in Pensacola and one crashes. The two remaining pilots, Tommy Winslow (Ramon Navarro) and Steve Randall (Ralph Graves) are assigned as fleet aviators in San Diego and develop a romantic rivalry for the beautiful Anita Hastings (Anita Page).

There is plenty of airborne action, and for history buffs, views of the Naval Academy, early Navy biplanes, operations aboard the Navy's first carrier, USS Langley, and an appearance of the Navy's famous aerobatic team, the "Three Sea Hawks". Airplanes on film include the Consolidated NY-2 trainer, Boeing F2B fighter, and Douglas T2D-1 torpedo bomber.

Trivia:

The screenplay was based on a story by retired Lieutenant Cdr. Frank "Spig" Wead, who wrote screenplays for a number of aviation films including two others filmed at North Island, *Hell Divers* (1931) and *Dive Bomber* (1941). He'd been an accomplished naval aviator, but was medically discharged, and went on to a career in Hollywood.



Three Curtiss OC-2 aircraft fly in formation circa 1929. Photo courtesy of San Diego Air and Space Museum Archives.

Flight

Flight. Columbia Pictures. Director: Frank Capra. Stars: Jack Holt, Lila Lee, Ralph Graves. Premiere: September 14, 1929. This is the first talkie filmed at North Island, and includes actor Ralph Graves who had starred in *The Flying Fleet*, filmed just the previous year. The film follows the exploits of two Marines, new recruit Lefty Phelps (Ralph Graves) and Sergeant "Panama" Williams (Jack Holt) stationed at North Island and sent to Nicaragua to quell a rebellion. Both vie for the affections of a Navy nurse (Lila Lee).

There is plenty of flight excitement, and again for history buffs, more views of early Navy and Marine biplanes and aerial sequences. Supported fully by the Marine Corps, young director Frank Capra had 28 airplanes at his disposal, with pilots and mechanics. Aerial photography was performed from a camera-equipped airplane, and director Capra flew alongside as director to coordinate aerial scenes. Airplanes on film included the Boeing FB-1 fighter, Consolidated NY-1B trainer, and Curtiss OC-2.

Trivia:

The Nicaragua scenes were filmed on location in the nearby towns of La Mesa and Fallbrook, California.

Hell Divers

Hell Divers. MGM. Director: George W. Hill. Stars: Clark Gable, Wallace Beery. Premiere: October 29, 1931.

MGM returned to San Diego for another “Spig” Wead story, this one about two aircrewmen, chief petty officers, at odds in the air and fighting for the affections of the same woman on the ground. The screen is filled with rousing banter as well as dramatic flying scenes filmed by MGM crews, featuring the F8C-2 Helldiver biplanes of squadron VF-1B, both at NAS North Island and aboard the huge new aircraft carrier USS Saratoga (CV 3) off San Diego and earlier during fleet exercises.

Trivia:

Actor Wallace Beery was a reserve lieutenant commander naval aviator at Naval Reserve Air Base Long Beach, and owned his own airplane.

Navy Lieutenant j.g. “Jimmy” Thach, who flew over 75 flight hours in support of the film, later became an ace, earned the Navy Cross, developed the Thach Weave fighter tactic, and rose to the rank of Admiral.



Standing by a Curtiss F8C-4 aircraft of Fighting Squadron 1-B, at Naval Air Station, North Island, California, 16 September 1931, while filming the movie Helldivers. Those present are (from left to right): Actor Cliff Edwards; Lieutenant (Junior Grade) John S. Thach, USN; Actor Clark Gable; Actor (and USNR Officer) Wallace Beery; Lieutenant (Junior Grade) H.S. Duckworth, USN, and Lieutenant (Junior Grade) E.P. Southwick, USN. Official U.S. Navy Photograph, now in the collections of the U.S. National Archives.



Vought O2U-2 Corsair aircraft, of Marine Corps Scouting Squadron 14 (VS-14M) Fly past USS Saratoga (CV-3) while preparing to land on board, circa 1930. Note Marine Corps insignia painted under the after cockpit of the closest aircraft. Courtesy of PHC John L. Highfill, USN (Retired). U.S. Naval History and Heritage Command Photograph.

Devil Dogs of the Air

Devil Dogs of the Air. Warner Brothers. Director: Lloyd Bacon. Stars: James Cagney, Pat O'Brien, Margaret Lindsey, Frank McHugh. Release: February 9, 1935.

Marine Aviation is featured in this popular film shot at North Island and aboard USS Saratoga (CV 3) during fleet maneuvers. The story follows two Marine buddies, Cagney and O'Brien, in a love triangle with actress Margaret Lindsey, the story woven into a film full of flying scenes. Cagney arrives at North Island as a brash civilian pilot in his own stunt plane and begins military training under the eyes of his seasoned Marine buddy Pat O'Brien, and after the inevitable shenanigans, eventually develops into a disciplined pilot.

Although the acting is good, the real draw of the film is the historic look at authentic naval aviation in 1934. The many flying scenes showcase the naval air station, Coronado, and San Diego. Fully supported by the Navy and Marine Corps, this is a treat for aircraft buffs, showing some rare airplanes such as the lone Marine Curtiss RC-1 (Kingbird) air ambulance, and featuring the Vought O2U-1s scout planes of VJ-7M and Boeing F4B-3 fighters of VB-4M.

Trivia:

Famous Hollywood stunt pilot Paul Mantz flew the aerial scenes for Cagney.

Wings Over Honolulu

Wings Over Honolulu. Universal Pictures. Director: H. C. Potter. Stars: Wendy Barrie, Ray Milland, William Gargan. Release: May 16, 1937.

Adapted from a "Redbook Magazine" story, the plot revolves around the trials of Navy wife Wendy Barrie as she adjusts to life in Hawaii after leaving her southern plantation to marry naval aviator Ray Milland. The marriage falters, and a romantic triangle ensues. Don't expect to see a lot of flying - there is only a few minutes of actual flying, the remainder done with special effects models. Filming at the air station includes a formation of the open cockpit Keystone PK-1 flying boats of VP-1F, scenes on the seaplane ramp, a Grumman Duck taxiing into the water, and some aerobatics by a Grumman F3F fighter.

Trivia:

Despite its title, none of this was filmed in Hawaii. Most of the movie was done at Universal, with some live shots at North Island including USS Ranger (CV 4) pier side.



Three Curtiss OC-2 aircraft fly in formation circa 1929. Photo courtesy of San Diego Air and Space Museum Archives.



Lieutenant Commander Fernaldo P. Anderson, commanding officer of patrol bombings Squadron 33 (VPB-33), in the cockpit of his PBY-5/5A "Catalina, in the Southwest pacific September 25, 1944. Official U.S. Navy Photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives.

Wings of the Navy

Wings of the Navy. Warner Brothers. Director: Lloyd Bacon. Stars: George Brent, Olivia de Havilland, John Payne, Frank McHugh. Premiere: February 3, 1939.

With full support of the Navy, this pre-war film was akin to a recruiting film portraying the path of a naval aviator from training at NAS Pensacola to operational flying from NAS North Island and the design of a new fighter for the Navy. The story follows the typical love triangle, with competitive brothers, John Payne and George Brent, vying for the affection of Olivia de Havilland. Filming began in June 1938 and showcased the new Consolidated PBY Catalina patrol flying boat that was to become the most important patrol plane of World War II.

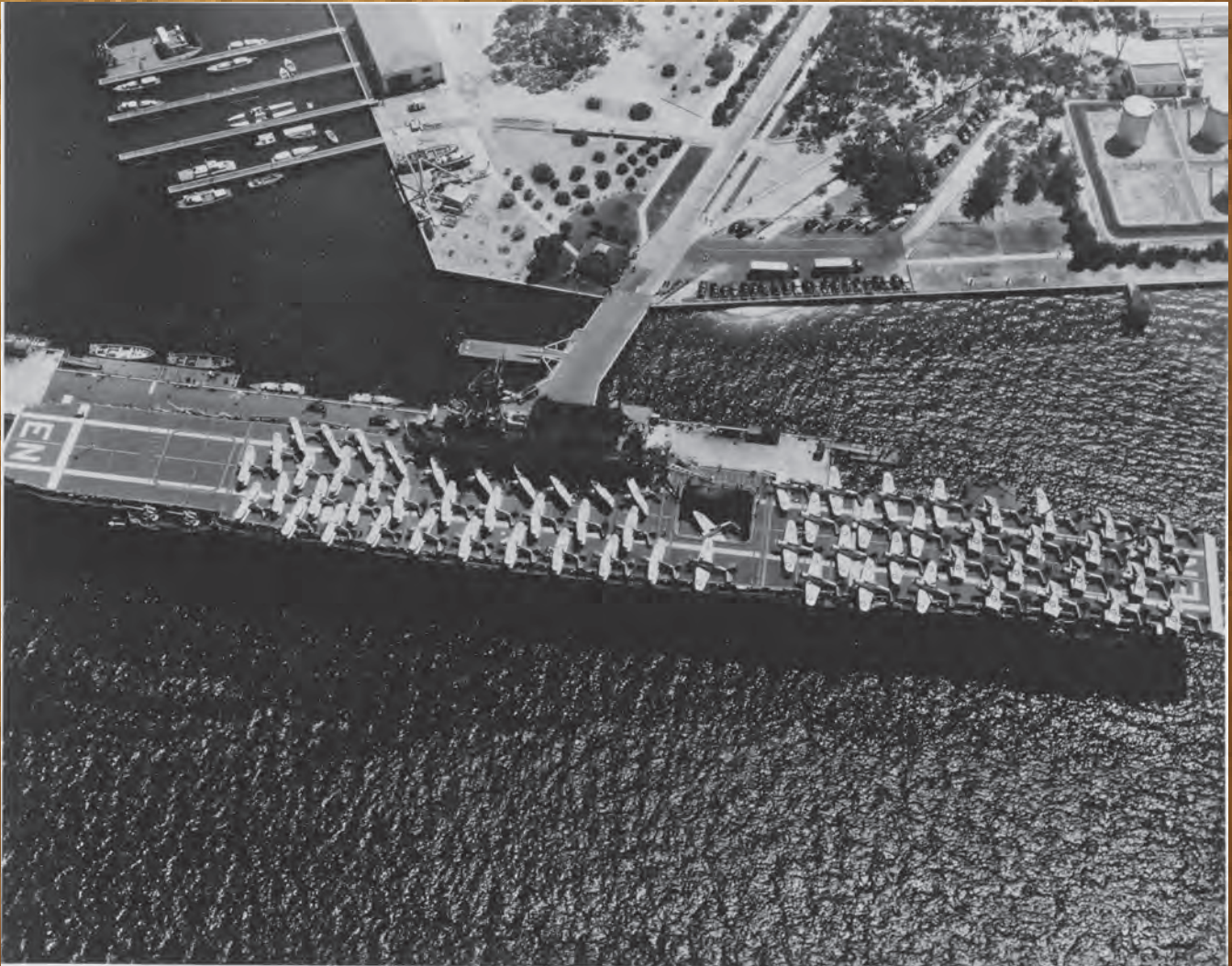
Trivia:

Warner Brothers built a convincing mock-up of a PBY Catalina cabin for interior flight shots.

Eyes of the Navy

Eyes of the Navy. MGM. Documentary. Stars: Warren McCollum, Charles Middleton. Release: October 26, 1940

Fully supported by the Navy, this 20-minute documentary was meant to promote naval aviation. Using primarily stock Navy footage, it is narrated well and follows flight training through Pensacola and beyond. As a recruiting film it is well done, with visually exciting scenes of all phases of pilot training, seaplane catapult launches, carrier operations, and dive bombing. Released a year after World War II began in Europe, it is a good overview of 1940 naval aviation at Pensacola, Miramar, and North Island with an obvious recruiting motive. It's a good opportunity to see NAS North Island and USS Enterprise (CV 6) in 1940.



USS Enterprise (CV-6) pierside at NAS North Island June 24, 1940. There are 65 planes on deck, including: 16 F3F fighters; 18 SBC; 15 BT; and 16 TBD. Official U.S. Navy Photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives.

Flight Command

Flight Command. MGM. Director: Frank Borzage. Stars: Robert Taylor, Ruth Hussey, Walter Pidgeon. Premiere: December 17, 1940.

The film is a drama set at North Island with some good flying scenes. Actor Robert Taylor arrives in San Diego fresh from Pensacola and is assigned to the fictitious "Hellcats" squadron, flying F3F fighters. He becomes innocently involved with his skipper's wife, Ruth Hussey, and is accused by his squadron mates of seducing her. When a pilot is killed testing a new blind landing device, the skipper's wife becomes distraught. Robert Taylor fixes the device and later saves the skipper (Walter Pidgeon) by landing his plane

in the fog using the perfected device. All ends well. Actor Red Skelton adds humor in his role as a junior pilot.

There are authentic flying scenes at North Island featuring the Grumman F3F-2 fighters of squadron VF-6 from USS Enterprise (CV 6).

Trivia:

Actor Robert Taylor was a Navy flight instructor during World War II, and appeared in a number of official flight training films.

The Navy loaned an F3F-2 fighter (BuNo 1028) to MGM for 3 months (Aug-Oct 1940) to film the hangar scenes in the studio.

The "Hellcats" squadron name was fictitious, as were its insignia and designation painted on the fighter used in the movie.



Naval Reservist and actor Lieutenant Robert Taylor shows Rear Admiral Osborne B. Hardison, Chief of Naval Air Primary Training, the script of a motion picture then being photographed at N.A.S. New Orleans, LA., May 1945. Lieutenant Taylor, an instructor at the station, is an assistant in the production of this series of training films. Official U.S. Navy Photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives.

Dive Bomber

Dive Bomber. Warner Brothers. Director: Michael Curtiz. Stars: Errol Flynn, Fred MacMurray, Ralph Bellamy, Alexis Smith. Premiere: August 12, 1941.

This is the first Hollywood full-color drama of naval aviation, filmed in Technicolor. This fabulous film is a favorite of aviation aficionados due to its magnificent colors (the yellow-winged fighters, the blue Pacific, the blue and gray skies, the yellow trainers), its top Hollywood stars, the big formations of airplanes, the authentic flight deck scenes on USS Enterprise (CV 6), and an engaging plot.

Written by retired Lieutenant Commander "Spig" Wead, the film follows a new flight surgeon (Errol Flynn), a senior dive bomber pilot (Fred MacMurray), and a seasoned flight surgeon (Ralph Bellamy) as they overcome their differences to work at solving the deadly blackout problem of Navy dive bomber pilots. A young Alexis Smith appears as the subject of a romantic rivalry between Flynn and MacMurray. Featured are the blue-tailed F3F-2 fighters of VF-6.

There are plenty of authentic flying scenes in the skies around San Diego and at sea including large formation flights, dive bombing, carrier landings and takeoffs. In nearly every scene on the ramp, planes fly over, creating the impression of a very busy base. San Diego folks will recognize views of the naval air station, the Hotel Del Coronado, the Point Loma lighthouse, and surrounding areas.

Airplanes on film include the Grumman F3F-2 fighter, Douglas TBD Devastator torpedo bomber, Curtiss SBC scout bomber, Northrop BT-1 and Vought SB2U Vindicator dive bombers, all in colorful pre-war paint.

Trivia:

The Navy flew down rows and rows of yellow N3N biplane trainers from NAS Long Beach just for the film.

Many of the Navy pilots in the movie flew a year later in the Battle of Midway.

When Warner Brothers later needed more aerial footage, the Navy was already repainting its airplanes in overall dull gray camouflage. For continuity, special arrangements were made to temporarily repaint some planes with yellow wings and colored markings, but not their gray fuselages.

The World Premiere was held at the Plaza Theater in downtown San Diego.



Ground crewman cranks up the engine of a N3N -1 Yellow Peril training aircraft (BU -0689) at the start of a training flight for a Naval aviation cadet. Circa 1940-42. Official U.S. Navy Photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives.

Task Force

Task Force. Warner Brothers. Director: Delmer Daves. Stars: Gary Cooper, Walter Brennan, Jack Holt, Jane Wyatt, Wayne Morris. Premiere: August 30, 1949.

This film is based on a fictional officer who is a proponent of naval aviation throughout his career. Upon his retirement as an admiral (Gary Cooper) reflects on his career as a naval aviator and his role in developing aircraft carriers into a fighting force that helped win World War II. Almost a biography and documentary, it follows his career from the days of the Langley through World War II using official combat footage and Warner Brothers filming of actual flying. The black-and-white film blends into color for the last 18 minutes to include color combat footage. It's a wonderful history lesson about the development of carrier aviation.

Warner Brothers cast and crews came to North Island to film some scenes, and embarked on the escort carrier USS Bairoko (CVE 115) to recreate the early Langley flying. Some filming was done on USS

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Naval Aviator and actor Wayne Morris with Jimmy Stewart. Official U.S. Navy Photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives.

tietam (CV 36). A host of craft appear, from biplanes F9F Panthers. Stunt pilot Paul Mantz flew aerial sequences, and used his rare 1920 Orenco Model F-4 convincing stand-in for a Navy VE-7 biplane.

Trivia:

Actor Wayne Morris flew F6F Hellcats in VF-15 on USS Essex (CV 9) and shot down seven enemy planes. He earned four Distinguished Flying Crosses and two Air Medals.

Special premieres were screened on the USS Midway in the Atlantic and the USS Valley Forge in the Pacific.



Thousands of people tour USS Princeton (CV-37) during an open house August 1, 1954. The PRINCETON's officers and men acted as guides and briefed the public on different phases of the ship's operation. The tour began on the hangar deck and culminated on the flight deck after an exciting ride up the plane elevator. On the flight deck, the public was given an opportunity to examine the various types of aircraft. Official U.S. Navy Photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives.

Flat Top

Flat Top. Monogram Pictures. Director: Lesley Selander. Stars: Sterling Hayden, Richard Carlson. Release: October 26, 1952.

In this carrier drama, Korean War air group commander Sterling Hayden recounts his World War II experiences as squadron commander on the same ship flying against the Japanese. As the hard-nosed commander, he whips his squadron into shape to fly and fight, eventually winning the respect of his pilots.

Film crews came to North Island in 1952 to embark on USS Princeton (CV 37) to film the flight operations of its air group en route to Pearl Harbor and combat in Korea. Primarily set entirely on the Princeton, the squadron flies the F4U Corsair, the film's featured airplane. There are many authentic flight deck scenes merged with color combat footage and the usual studio cockpit shots. It's good drama with good flying scenes.

Trivia:

The film premiered on Armistice Day, November 11, 1952 at NAS North Island aboard USS Princeton, on which the film was shot.

Men of the Fighting Lady

*M***en of the Fighting Lady.** MGM. Director: Andrew Marton. Stars: Van Johnson, Walter Pidgeon, Louis Calhern. Premiere: May 7, 1954.

This thrilling Korean war drama is based on two magazine stories about the Korean War by James Michener by Commander Harry A. Burns, USN. It follows pilots in VF-192 Flying F9F Panther jets during combat operations over Korea, with combat footage integrated into the live action. There is plenty of authenticity, since it includes filming aboard the North Island-based carrier USS Oriskany (CV 34). It includes the incredible incident, based on a true story, of a pilot blinded by shrapnel and being talked down to a landing aboard ship. The world premiere was held on Oriskany upon its return to North Island. This is a good portrayal of a carrier squadron during the Korean war.

Trivia:

Grumman F9F Panther jets from VF-192 were also used to film *The Bridges at Toko-Ri* (1954). After the filming of these two movies, the squadron changed its name from "Golden Dragons" to "World Famous Golden Dragons".



Grumman F9F-2 Panther fighters, of Fighter Squadron 24 (VF-24) Fly in formation near the Korean coast after a strike on enemy positions. They are based aboard USS Boxer (CV-21). Photo is dated 14 May 1952. Official U.S. Navy Photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives.



USS Kearsarge (CV-33) Sikorski HO3S-1 helicopter in flight over the carrier's flight deck, during Operation Frigid, November 1948. Official U.S. Navy Photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives.

The Bridges at Toko-Ri

The Bridges at Toko-Ri. Paramount. Director: Mark Robson. Stars: William Holden, Grace Kelly, Fredric March, Mickey Rooney. Release: December 1954.

This Korean War drama is based on James Michener's 1953 novel of the same name. In the movie, reserve aviator William Holden is recalled to fight in the skies over Korea, a dangerous profession in a largely forgotten war. The story portrays the frustrations, danger, and heroism of the carrier aviators in that war. A sober ending is summarized by the admiral when he asks himself, "Where do we get such men?"

The cast and crew went aboard USS Oriskany (CV 34), deployed from North Island on a WestPac deployment, in November and December 1953, only months after the armistice was signed in July. Filming in the Sea of Japan, the crews captured flight deck operations in full color featuring Grumman F9F Panther jets of VF-192 and Sikorsky HO3S-1 rescue helicopters. North Island-based sailors and officers played on screen in their real shipboard roles and as extras. Studio special effects and models were used well to complete the flying scenes. Later in California, North Island supplied the AD Skyraiders used in the rescue sequences. It's a wonderful look at early Navy jet operations aboard a straight-deck carrier. The film has spectacular color aerial footage, actual helicopter rescues at sea, underway refueling, and is a realistic portrayal of the carrier Navy in 1953. An aviation classic film.

Trivia:

The bridges at Toko-Ri are fictitious, but are based on the real Korean bridges at Majon-ni and Samdong-ni, key targets for US aerial forces.

The film won an Academy Award for Best Special Effects.

Film crews also filmed aboard USS Kearsarge (CV 33) when one of Oriskany's catapults broke down during filming of launch sequences.



Battle Stations

Battle Stations. Columbia Pictures. Director: Lewis Seiler. Stars: John Lund, William Bendix, Richard Boone. Release: February 1956.

This 81-minute dramatic film is loosely based on the story of the aircraft carrier USS Franklin (CV 13), severely damaged during kamikaze attacks during the U.S. invasion of Okinawa in 1945, and its crew's heroic battle to keep her afloat.

USS FRANKLIN (CV-13) burning after being bombed off Japan, March 19, 1945. Official U.S. Navy Photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives.

Columbia Pictures crews came North Island in July 1955 to film USS Princeton (CV 37) while pier side. They recreated battle

damage and fires on the flight deck, all while the ship was safely tied up. To keep production costs down on this low-budget film, the studio also made heavy use of wartime combat footage.



USS FRANKLIN (CV-13) afire and listing after a Japanese air attack, off the coast of Japan March 19, 1945. Note fire hoses and crewmen on her forward flight deck, and water streaming from her hangar deck. Photographed from her hangar deck. Photographed from USS SANTA FE (CL-60). Official U.S. Navy Photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives.

Lieutenant Robin Crusoe, U.S.N.

Lieutenant Robin Crusoe, U.S.N. Walt Disney Pictures. Director: Byron Paul. Stars: Dick Van Dyle, Nancy Kwan, Akim Tamiroff. Premiere: June 29, 1966.

This is a G-rated comedy starring naval aviator Dick Van Dyke who ejects from his F-8 Crusader into the Pacific and after days in his life raft, washes ashore on a tropical paradise. Humor ensues with a poker-playing chimp, an abandoned Japanese submarine full of gadgets, Nancy Kwan as the chief's daughter, and a chief who wants to marry her off to the pilot, who just happens to be engaged. The film begins with stirring views of USS Kitty Hawk (CV 63) at sea and the pilot's grand arrival in a Navy H-2 helicopter after his rescue, the story being a flashback that he relates in a letter to his fiancé. There are only a few minutes of actual ship and aircraft, the rest being filmed on a sound stage or on the island of Kaua'i.

Trivia:

In recognition of the Navy's support, Disney arranged for the film's world premiere to be held aboard Kitty Hawk, with its crew as the only invited guests.

Based on a story by Walt Disney himself, who is credited under the pseudonym "Retlaw Yensid", which is "Walter Disney" spelled backwards.



Walt Disney and Dick Van Dyke visiting the USS Kitty Hawk (CVA-63) with Captain Martin D. Carmody on July 6, 1965 for matters relating to the film "Lieutenant Robin Crusoe U.S.N." Official U.S. Navy Photograph, now in the collections of the National Archives.



Captain Scott Mulvehill completes his last carrier landing as a squadrom commander July 8, 2010. North Island.

Top Gun

Top Gun. Paramount. Director: Tony Scott. Stars: Tom Cruise, Tim Robbins, Kelly McGillis, Val Kilmer. Premiere: May 12, 1986.

By far the most popular and profitable aviation film in history, this film quickly became a classic. Filmed in many locations around San Diego, North Island was part of the filming in the summer of 1985. The North Island Officer's Club served as the venue for the graduation ceremony, set next to the swimming pool. Although the movie is set on USS Enterprise (CVN 65), the interior shipboard scenes were filmed on USS Ranger (CVA 61) pier side at North Island. Arguably the star of the movie is not Tom Cruise, but the powerful F-14A Tomcat fighter. Also appearing are the Douglas A-4 Skyhawks of Top Gun with the school's Northrop F-5 fighters painted to play the role of the fictional MiG-28 fighter.

Trivia:

Top Gun was the highest-grossing movie of 1986, earning \$356 million worldwide.

After the film's release, the US Navy stated that the number of young men who joined wanting to be Naval Aviators went up by 500 percent. Infact, Captain Scott T. Mulvehill, the current Naval Base Coronado Commanding Officer and a graduate of Top Gun, credits the film with his desire to become a Naval Aviator after seeing in the movie theater.



Rear Admiral Pete "Viper" Pettigrew, a former Top Gun instructor served as a technical advisor on the film, and made a cameo appearance in the film.

Paramount paid as much as \$7,800 per hour for fuel and other operating costs whenever aircraft were flown outside their normal duties.

All Hands Magazine Published the following story and photos by Photographers Mate 2nd Class Michael D.P. Flynn May 1986 Number 830

*H*ollywood enlisted into the Navy in 1985 when Paramount Pictures began production of its \$13.5 million action-based film, "Top Gun." The film stars Tom Cruise of "Risky Business" and highlights the training his character,

Pete "Maverick" Mitchell, receives at the Naval Fighter Weapons School at NAS Miramar, San Diego.

The movie's title comes from the nickname given graduates of the five-week program who go on to become the Navy's "Top Guns."

Filming for "Top Gun" took place aboard the aircraft carriers USS Ranger (CV 61) and USS Enterprise (CVN 65). Portions of the film also were shot at: NAS North Island's Officers' Club; NAS Miramar; Naval





Weapons Center, China Lake; and the Pacific Missile Test Center, Pt. Mugu.

Released earlier this summer, with the premier to coincide with celebrations of the 75th Anniversary of naval aviation, "Top Gun" is directed by Tony Scott, who also directed "The Hunter," and co-stars Kelly McGillis of "Witness," Anthony Edwards of "Revenge of the Nerds," Michael Ironside of NBC's "V," Val Kilmer of "Top Secret" and Tom Skerritt of "Alien."

Navy ships and bases in California served as backdrops for many of the movie's scenes, and several squadrons and individuals also were involved in the actual filming.

Helicopter Combat Support Squadron 1's Search and Rescue (SAR) Swim School at NAS North Island gave assistance to the shooting crew when the movie's script called for parachute jumping and water rescue scenes. Senior Chief Parachute Rigger met with director Scott and discussed what support the school might provide.

"I asked them to tell me what they needed," Kauber said. "It was perfect. Their shooting script fell right in

line with what we teach here at the school."

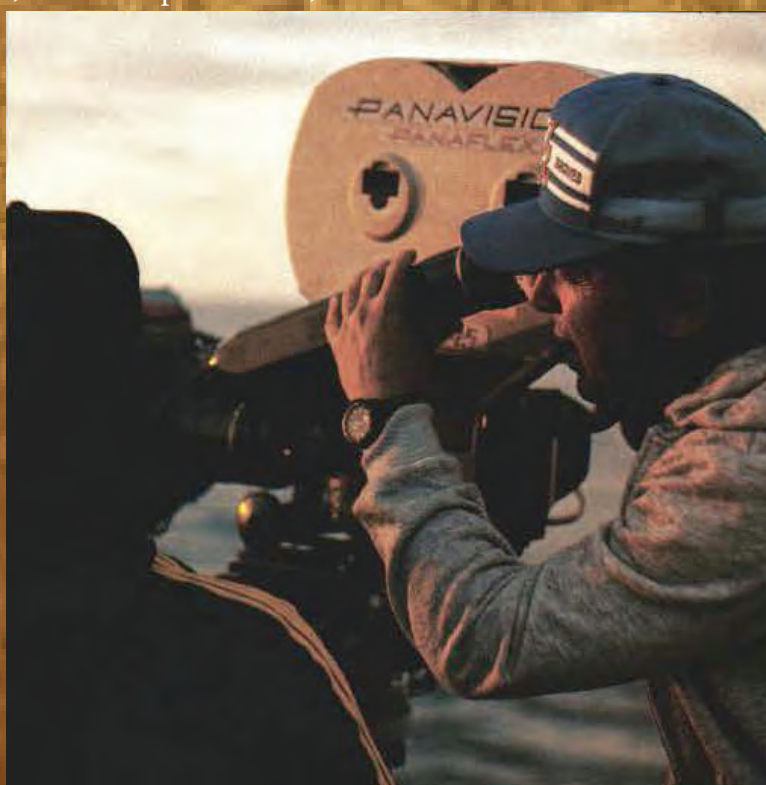
In addition to training Cruise and co star Edwards in water survival, Kauber's crew provided technical assistance to Scott during the filming of open ocean rescue scenes.

"As it turned out, it was a good thing we were on the scene," Kauber said. Scott had selected the Coast Guard to do the helicopter rescue scenes. But, as Kauber pointed out, "He hadn't taken into account some of the differences between the Navy's SAR training and the Coast Guard's training."

The scene called for the pilot and the co-pilot to be hoisted, together, into the helo. The Coast Guard doesn't train for that sort of operation. "As the scene was shot and reshot, it became obvious that the Coast Guard swimmer was getting tired," Kauber said. "The swimmer finally told the director, 'I can't do it anymore. I gotta rest.'"

In the movies-more so than just about anywhere else-time is money. When Kauber told Scott that two-man hoists were a routine part of the Navy's SAR training, Scott put Kauber into the Coast Guard suit and finished shooting the scene.

If none of his scenes get cut, Kauber will



appear three times in the film; once as a Coast Guard swimmer, and again as a substitute for Cruise in a life raft. But the third and best moment in his film work came when Kauber and his brother, Mark, an Aviation Ordnanceman 1st Class and instructor at the Basic Underwater Demolition School for Seals (BUDS/SEALS), got to strut their stuff high above San Diego's skyline. Mark was outfitted in a Soviet pilot's uniform. The brothers did a free fall together during a parachute drop.

"It was all our scene, Kauber said as he recalled the thrill. "We set it up, then jumped together when we were signaled." Lieutenant Commander Richard J. "Warlock" Bradley, executive officer of Fighter Squadron 213, enjoyed a temporary promotion when he played the role of an admiral aboard Enterprise. According to Bradley, in his scene he congratulates Cruise for downing two Soviet MiGs. Bradley joked that the MiGs might not be the only thing that gets shot down. "I could end up on the cutting room floor." Pilots from Fighter Squadrons 11, 124 and 211 will appear in the backgrounds of certain scenes in the film. They said they had to audition for the parts. "We volunteered to be in the film, but it was the people from Paramount who made the final selection," said Lieutenant junior grade Bruce Fecht. "I guess they wanted to look us over first."

Hollywood has spotlighted the Navy in several recent films. "Winds of War," a TV mini-series, and "Final Countdown," a major theatrical release, were both based on naval themes. Then there was the film, "Taps," in which Tom Cruise appeared as a military cadet. Now, with the Navy added to Cruise's repertoire of cinematic masterpieces, and considering the excitement involved in filming "Top Gun," it can be said that Tom Cruise's film career is "Not just a job . . . It's an adventure."





Crewmembers man the rails by the carrier's island, as she departs Naval Air Station, North Island, California February 24, 1989 to begin a western Pacific deployment. Photographed by PH1 Michael D.P. Flynn. Official U.S. Navy Photograph, from the collections of the Naval History and Heritage Command.

Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home

Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home. Paramount. Director: Leonard Nimoy. Stars: William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, DeForest Kelley, James Doohan. Release: November 26, 1986.

The first Star Trek motion picture to be filmed on location, Star Trek IV traces the voyage of a captured Klingon spaceship, manned by the Star Trek crew, back in time to 1986 to bring back humpback whales, the only beings who can communicate with an alien probe and thus save the world.

Set in 1986 San Francisco, the future home of Starfleet headquarters, the crew need to find high-energy photons from the reactor of a nuclear "wessel" to repair their damaged dilithium crystals. The only nuclear reactor in the area was on the nuclear-powered USS Enterprise (CVN 65) based at nearby NAS Alameda. In February 1986, the real Enterprise was at sea, its stand-in became the USS Ranger (CV 61) pier-side at NAS North Island, only months after Top Gun had been filmed on board. Interior scenes with Checkov were filmed on Ranger, and finally Checkov is shown running away and falling onto the Ranger's elevator.

Trivia:

This is the only Star Trek feature film where no one dies.

This is the only film in which Kirk says, "Scotty, beam me up."

The Hunt for Red October

The Hunt for Red October. Paramount. Director: John McTiernan. Stars: Sean Connery, Alec Baldwin, Scott Glenn, Sam Neill, James Earl Jones. Release: March 2, 1990.

The film is based on Tom Clancy's 1984 bestselling novel of the same name. Filmed with the support of the Navy, this popular submarine thriller does have North Island connections. North Island-based helicopter squadrons provided crews and two helicopters seen in the movie, a Sikorsky H-3 Sea King and a Sikorsky SH-60B Seahawk. In addition, the real DSRV Mystic was based at North Island.

During the film, CIA analyst Jack Ryan (Alec Baldwin) is flown from USS Enterprise to the submarine USS Dallas in a Sikorsky H-3 Sea King helicopter. The helicopter and crew were from squadron HS-2. The transfer scene was filmed in the Strait of Juan de Fuca with submarine USS Louisville (SSN 724) in good weather using a stunt man on the hoist. Later editing made it appear to be done in heavy weather. Squadron HS-8 also participated when HS-2 was on deployment.

In the film, another helicopter, a Sikorsky SH-60B Seahawk, is shown operating from the frigate USS Reuben James (FGG 57), also filmed in the Strait of Juan de Fuca. The helicopter and crew were from the ship's HSL-43 detachment, and operated out of NAS Whidbey Island after being displaced by the film crew aboard.

Trivia:

Ironically, the real submarine USS Dallas (SSN 700) did not appear in the film. Instead it was portrayed by the submarines Houston and Louisville.



Flight of the Intruder

Flight of the Intruder. Paramount. Director: John Milius. Stars: Danny Glover, Willem Dafoe, Brad Johnson. Release: January 18, 1991.

Based on the novel by Stephen Coonts, this Vietnam drama depicts A-6 Intruder pilots frustrated by the war, and their clandestine mission to bomb Hanoi, off limits at the time. It's a realistic drama that depicts the mood in the fleet during the war. The flight deck scenes were filmed on North Island-based USS Independence (CV 62) during two weeks at sea in November 1989. The movie features Grumman A-6E Intruders of squadron VA-165, whose airplanes were repainted to represent the story's VA-196 squadron. Meant to be released in 1990, a new ending was written and an additional scene was hurriedly filmed at North Island aboard USS Ranger (CV 61), an available carrier that the Navy offered Paramount.

The film is full of aerial photography. Other aircraft appearing in the movie include: Sikorsky SH-3 Sea King helicopter, in normal air wing colors and painted gray to resemble a rescue copter, North American RA-5C Vigilante, Vought A-7 Corsair II, Douglas A-3 Skywarrior, Grumman C-2 Greyhound and McDonnell Douglas F-4 Phantom II. A MiG-17 appears in North Vietnamese markings and two privately-owned Douglas A-1 Skyraiders fly in the rescue sequence.

Trivia: During filming aboard Independence, the Paramount film crews kept the ship's fire party busy, with small electrical fires started by their lighting equipment.



Flight deck crewmen ready an A-6A Intruder of Attack Squadron 165 (VA-165) for launching, during Vietnam War operations in the South China Sea April 25, 1972. Photographed by PH3 Ronald F. Reichwein. Official U.S. Navy Photograph, from the collections of the Naval History and Heritage Command.



A camera crew sets up for scenes to be taped on the flight deck for the upcoming motion picture "Stealth," with the crew of the Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72). After ten months of dry docked Planned Incremental Availability (PIA) maintenance, Lincoln is conducting local operations in the Pacific Ocean in preparation for an upcoming deployment. U.S. Navy photo by Photographer's Mate 3rd Class Tyler J. Clements. (RELEASED)

Stealth

Stealth. Columbia Pictures. Director: Rob Cohen Stars: Josh Lucas, Jessica Biel, Jamie Foxx, Sam Shepard. Release: July 29, 2005

This science fiction action film features the fictional F/A-37 Talon, a stealthy new attack aircraft. The story is set on USS Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72) as the planes go on clandestine strike missions including North Korea.

Lincoln's flight deck hosted 12 squadrons for carrier qualifications and 80 film crew, along with a 53-foot-long futuristic stealth fighter named "Talon." The Ship's crew worked to both complete the ship's mission and lend a hand in the production. Sailors were given numerous opportunities throughout the week to be extras in the film and share the spotlight with the Hollywood lineup. Donning float coats and cranials, the Sailors, producers and actors looked alike on the flight deck as the cameras rolled.

Trivia:

The mockup of the fictional F/A-37 Talon looked so convincing on deck that photos caused a stir on the internet about a secret new Navy airplane.

Jessica Biel told Navy journalists that she was lost all the time while aboard Lincoln.



A CH-53E Sea Stallion from Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron (HMH) 463 lands aboard the amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD 6) while the ship is pierside at Naval Base San Diego. U.S. Navy photo by Senior Chief Mass Communication Specialist Joe Kane/Released

The “Seahawk” provided the Fleet with the most capable submarine tracking systems available. It was a most welcome addition to the Navy’s arsenal, especially at a time which Soviet submarine technology was advancing by leaps and bounds.

One year later, another helicopter came on line and became the first West Coast squadron to receive the H-53E.

The “Super Stallion,” able to lift over 16 tons, dramatically expanded the vertical replenishment capabilities of the San Diego based fleet. The H-53E was, and still is, the largest helicopter capable of operation from Naval ships.

Ordinarily, when a ship pulls up to the quay wall at NAS North Island, it doesn’t attract much attention. But the USS Vincennes (CG-49), which arrived at its NAS North Island berth August 10, 1985, was no ordinary ship.

The third ship of the Ticonderoga-class, Aegis-equipped guided missile cruisers, Vincennes was the first of its kind stationed on the West Coast. USS Valley Forge became the second when she joined her sister ship one year later in March.

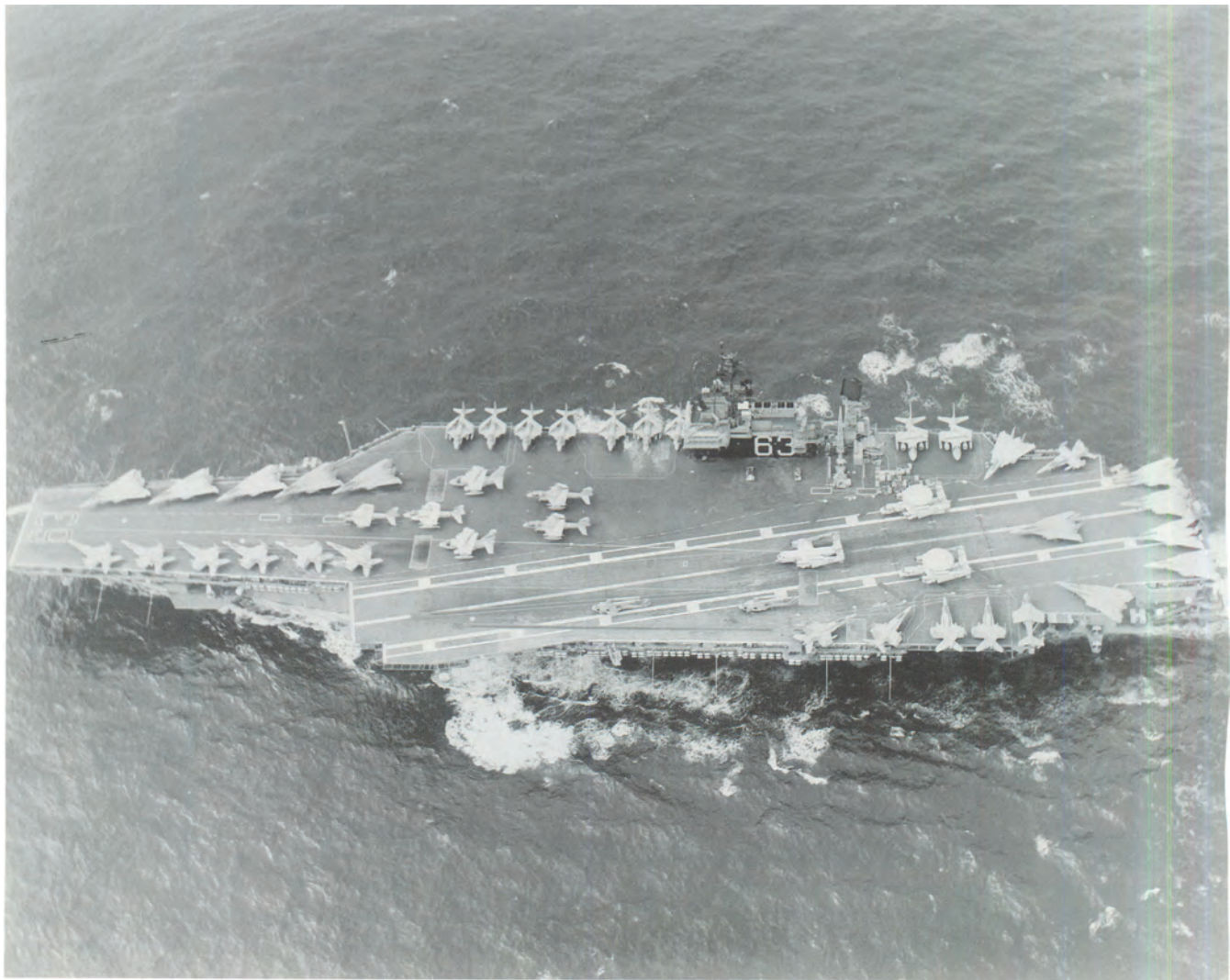
Both ships boasted the state of the art technology necessary to seek out and defend against any aggressor. Besides the Aegis weapons system, their package included twin surface to air missile launchers and gun mounts, Harpoon missile launchers, and the Phalanx Close-in Weapons System. They were also the first ships to use the helicopter Recovery, Arresting, Securing and Traversing (RAST) system and the first to permanently embark the modern SH-60B “Seahawk.”

The building year

Although NAS North Island saw modernization and new construction every year, 1985 stands out as a remarkable one because of numerous projects and the planning that went into them. Most projects had their roots in a 1983 construction plan which included new facilities for the SH- 608 “Seahawk” and new additions to raise the standard of living for personnel.

In January, the Child Care Center which originally opened in 1979 in building 771 and eventually ended up in building 613, got a facelift. In addition to structural improvements, the entire center received a new paint job. Despite the inconvenience of having children scattered throughout the Station and at Naval Amphibious Base, Coronado, the parents and NAS North Island officials were delighted that their children would benefit from a more modern facility.

Also, on January 19th, NAS North Island became one of the first two Naval stations worldwide to offer its personnel a McDonald’s restaurant. NAS North Island’s commanding officer, Captain Russel Blatt, and his wife officiated at the opening ceremonies. They first stopped at the kitchen where the Skipper, in an official McDonald’s hat and apron, prepared a fast-food hamburger for his wife. Later, Mrs. Blatt christened the new addition to the station with a bottle of champagne proclaiming, “I christen you Mc-



Aircraft Carrier USS Kitty Hawk cruises the waters off Hawaii

First Tilt Rotor Ship Landings

“Sea Story” First hand account by Commander (retired) John C. Ball

*I*n 1982 I had a tiny part in North Island's history when as a Lieutenant Commander I made the first ship landings of a tilt-rotor aircraft on USS Tripoli (LPH-10) just off Point Loma. I flew the experimental NASA/Bell XV-15 Tilt Rotor Research Aircraft known as the forerunner of today's V-22 Osprey.

The XV-15 was a robust technology demonstrator and this foray into operational-type testing was unusual, but it was being used and paid for by the Army and Navy to answer questions about the type's suitability for the Joint-service Vertical take-off/landing Experimental (JVX) missions that evolved into the Osprey.

Specially for the Navy, could the tilt rotor concept operate safely from a ship? With its unique configuration and stronger downwash, could it hover easily with one rotor off the deck edge and one over the deck? We pilots already knew it could, but we had to prove it for the Navy.

Stationed at NAS Patuxent River as a Navy test pilot, I was thrilled when my boss assigned me to this project early in 1982. After months of tedious coordination with NASA, Bell Helicopter, Naval Air Sys-



XV-15 Number 1, N702NA, aboard USS Tripoli (LPH-10) off San Diego, CA during the Navy Shipboard Evaluation, August 1982. Pilots Dorman Cannon (Bell) and LCDR John Ball.



Bell XV-15 trials on LPH-10 USS Tripoli off San Diego 1982 piloted by John Ball and Bell test pilot Dorman Cannon photo via John Ball

tems Command, NAS North Island, and the ship; my small Navy test team and I arrived at North Island in mid-July and joined the NASA, Bell and Navy teams who would support the aircraft, telemetry, and data processing. We set up shop in HS-6 spaces and used the HS-10 flight line at the big double-dome hangars, Bldg. 340. I felt right at home in that hangar, having flown the H-46 Sea Knight in HC-11 from 1977-1980.

One of only two examples, the NASA/Bell XV-15 N702NA flew in from Army evaluations at Fort Huachuca, Arizona, wearing a desert camouflage paint scheme done in water-based paint. After time at the wash rack, the aircraft was resplendent in its base coat of dull gray paint with "USS TRIPOLI" stenciled on the fuselage.

A short time later, when returning from one of our flights, a North Island tower controller remarked that the aircraft was difficult to see in the coastal summer haze. It turned out that the Bell crew had unintentionally painted us in a tactical paint scheme - before it arrived in the fleet.

I flew the XV-15 with experienced Bell test pilot Dorman Cannon, a former Marine aviator. Since Dorman's last ship landing had been in 1966, we arranged familiarization deck landings aboard Tripoli using an H-46 Sea Knight from HC-3.

In the XV-15, Dorman and I flew a series of shore-based tests at North Island for familiarization and to



*Bell XV-15 trials on LPH-10 USS Tripoli off San Diego 1982 piloted by John Ball and Bell test pilot Dorman
Cannon photo via John Ball*

gather performance data in a realm that had not yet been flown by a tilt rotor, such as running takeoffs and sideward flight. We practiced deck landings on the simulated deck spots at Naval Outlying Field Imperial Beach, which also familiarized Tripoli's flight deck crew with the unique aircraft.

Finally, on August 2, 1982, we cranked up the XV-15 on the HS-10 line, taxied out, and flew seaward. We rounded Point Loma and flew to Tripoli a few miles offshore.

I was feeling comfortable in the aircraft after all of ten flights. As we approached the ship, I moved our nacelles aft, transitioned to helicopter mode, and slowed to 90 knots. I made a slow approach up the stern, stabilized in a hover, and made an easy touchdown in the center of the deck.

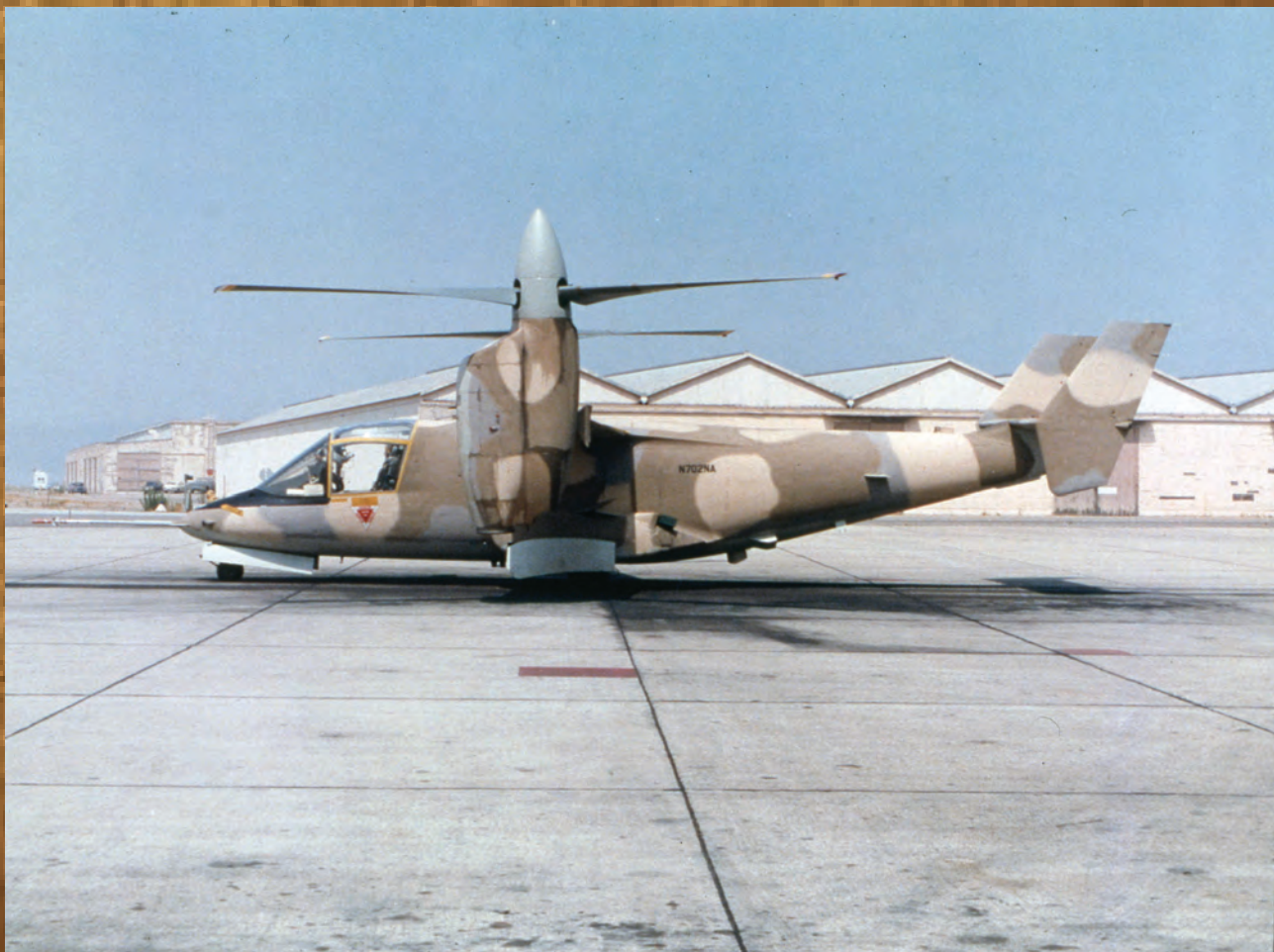
We had done it! Dorman had deferred to me to make the first landing, so I got my claim to fame.

It was interesting that the Bell team took some photos of our first landings, took the film off the ship with them that day, developed it quickly, and flew the photos to Washington that night, appearing on Capitol Hill the next day to support the infant JVX program.

In all, we spent three days flying to Tripoli, making 54 takeoffs and landings to various spots, usually within sight of Point Loma, concluding an important and satisfying test program. We proved a tilt rotor could safely operate from a ship.

With our mission complete, the XV-15 was flown back to Texas by Bell pilots and the test teams dispersed. In time, the JVX program came to fruition, with Bell-Boeing being awarded a contract to build a larger tilt-rotor later named the V-22 Osprey, which flew in 1989.

I thoroughly enjoyed my little part in making history at North Island.



XV-15 Number 1, N702NA at NASNI in July 1982 for the Navy Shipboard Evaluation aboard USS Tripoli (LPH-10) based out of NAS North Island. Aircraft had arrived from Fort Huachuca, Arizona wearing water-based camouflage paint for Army tests there. Before flight at NASNI it was washed off at the wash rack to reveal the gray undercoat it would wear during the Shipboard Evaluation.



NAS North Island Air Terminal stripped for renovation

Donald's of North Island." Huge crowds of people immediately rushed to the counters to buy lunch.

"McDonald's is truly in the Navy now," said the company's vice president, Tom Gruber, "We're pleased to be aboard." McDonald's had a monopoly on fast food for less than three months because on March 15, 1985, Del Taco opened its doors to the public. Besides offering a complete Mexican menu, including breakfast items, the store provided pricing at five percent lower than the concessionaire's standard San Diego prices.

Not all the 1985 grand openings dealt with food. The Naval Air Rework Facility, NAS North Island, one of San Diego County's largest employers, held a ribbon cutting ceremony for a new Composite Repair facility on Friday, March 29. The \$20 million structure, then the first of its kind anywhere, was constructed to perform specialized repair of aircraft and component parts made of graphite epoxy materials called "composites." With the Navy's newest aircraft being constructed of stronger, lighter, and more fatigue-resistant composite materials, the new facility's designation as principle repair point for the F/A- 18 "Hornet" took on added significance.

Nearly as old as Naval aviation itself, the Naval Air Rework Facility, affectionately called "NARF" by NAS North Islanders, began as an Assembly and Repair Office in 1919. Once a station department, "NARF" became an independent tenant command in April 1967. Providing service to the fleet for more than half a century, its customers included not only the Navy, but the Army, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard as well. Although its name changed to Naval Aviation Depot in 1981 its prime objectives are still to increase productivity and improve quality at reduced costs for customers and the taxpayer.

Modernization events that year were not limited to NAS North Island. On May 14 the Outlying Landing Field, Imperial Beach held ground breaking ceremonies for a new commissary. The new \$4.7 million

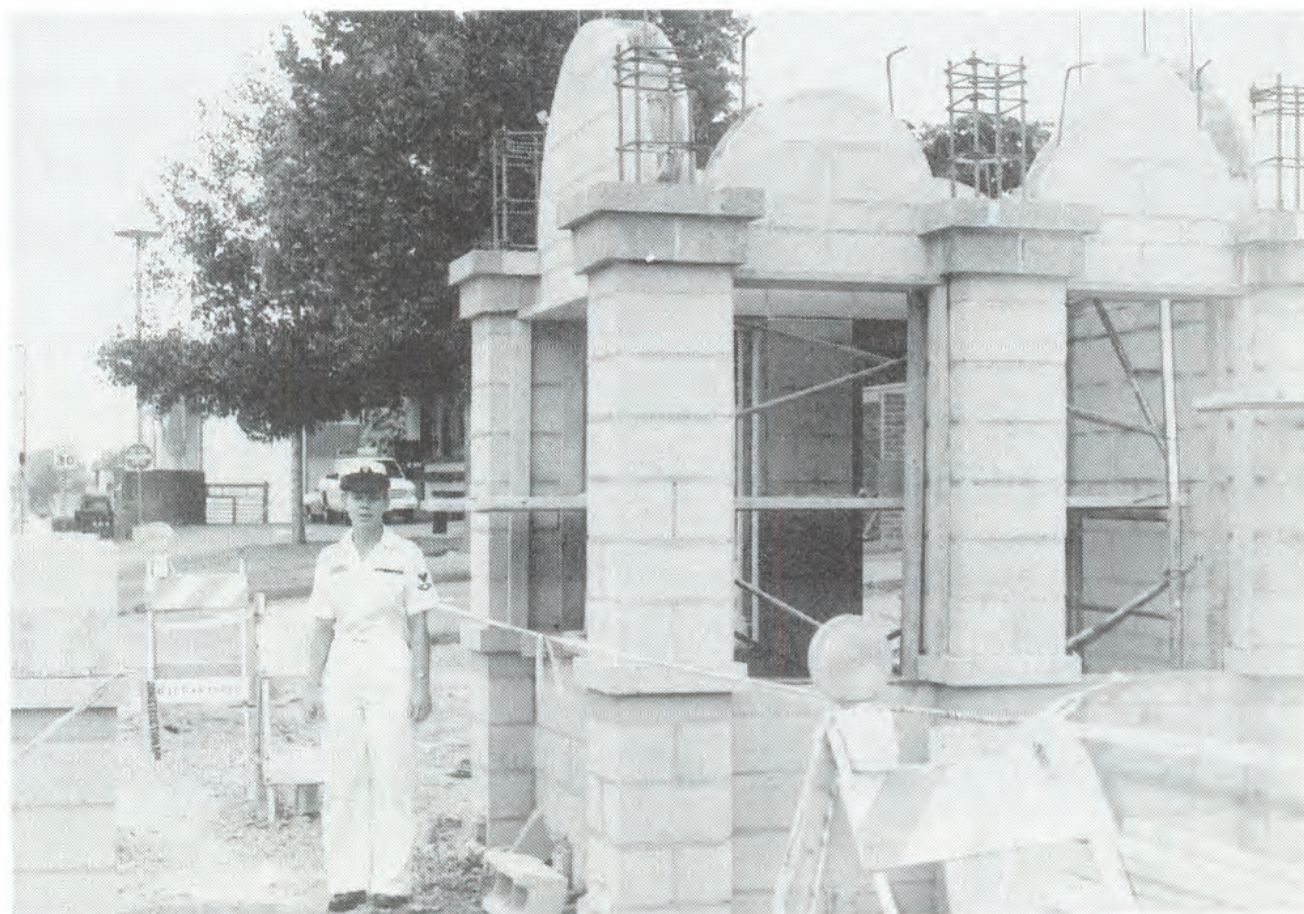
store was built to serve the needs of approximately 10,000 Navy households in the Imperial Beach, Chula Vista, and San Ysidro areas. Its doors opened one year later in June 1986.

To increase the Station's standard of living, Recreational Services was very pleased to announce the opening of Breakers Beach House in June. Located between the Navy Lodge and the golf course, the facility rented boogie boards, umbrellas, beach chairs, swim fins, masks, and snorkels. They also sold beer, soda, and fast food.

75 years of Naval Aviation

On Armed Forces Day, May 17, 1986, NAS North Island celebrated the 75th birthday of naval aviation. Local commands and NAS North Island tenant activities pooled their resources to make the joint celebration a day to remember. Activities and events included tours of the aircraft carriers Kitty Hawk and Constellation and static displays of aircraft. In addition to food and historic display booths, there were demonstrations from Naval Training Center's 50 State Flag Drill Unit and Crack Rifle Team, Service School Command's Color Guard, and NAS North Island's Security Patrol Dogs. The Marine Corps Recruit Depot's band provided entertainment throughout the day.

The displays centered around major events in the history of Naval Aviation, and NAS North Island, as its birthplace, played a large role in the day's festivities. Some of the events commemorated which involved the Station were the first seaplane flight, the first parachute jump, and the designation of Lieutenant T.G. Ellyson as Naval Aviator Number One.



NAS North Island Main Gate under construction



Old Salt

*M*aster Chief Boatswain's Mate David Hobbs, believed to have been the most senior Master CPO in the Navy when he retired Aug 2, 1985; began his recruit training in San Diego three months before the Dec. 7, 1941, Japanese surprise attack on Pearl Harbor. During his lifetime of service in the Navy, Hobbs served in WWII, Korea and Vietnam.

The following was first published when he re-enlisted in 1983. Hobbs retired in 1985, well past the mandatory retirement age of 62. He died Aug. 29, 2002.

*D*avid M. Hobbs is not exactly an ordinary sailor.

Just the mention of his name to a fleet sailor is apt to inspire stories that strain credibility. Seven days a week, year-round, he is on the carrier USS Ranger's aft brow in the darkness of early morning. With his arms crossed, he inconspicuously stands off to the side and watches the stream of sailors as they salute the petty officer of the watch and request permission to come aboard.

They are just starting their working day, but Hobbs has already been aboard for hours.

Hobbs, the 61-year-old son of Sam and Gladys Hobbs of Petros, Tenn., is a master chief boatswain's mate and command master chief aboard the San Diego-based carrier.

He's the Navy's oldest enlisted man on active duty – and approaches a living legend.

He knows about 90 percent of the ship's 5,000 man crew – 100 percent know him. Many greet him, which he acknowledges with a nod. Passing sailors salute, a sign of respect usually rendered only with commissioned officers.

"It just seems like the thing to do," one sailor explains.

As the command master chief, Hobbs is the Liaison between the Ranger's crew and commanding officer.

"A lot of the job is visibility," says Hobbs. "On a ship this size, that takes a lot of time." He tours the entire 1,100 foot, 86,000-ton carrier daily. According to one of the ship's crewmen, the master chief never has to be announced when he enters a working space. "You can feel him," says a young boatswain's mate. "You don't have to see him to know he's there. He has a presence." From the captain on the bridge to an airman on the flight deck, it's agreed there's something that sets him apart. But no one seems to be able to define exactly what it is.

"He's unique," says Captain Anthony Less, the Ranger's commanding Officer. "I've worked with several command master chiefs and he's one of a kind. Exactly why? It's hard to say."

"Dedication, self-assurance...there are so many things," he says, "and every one of us identifies with something different."

“For me it’s the way he does his job.”

While on the flight deck, Hobbs stops to talk with a group of sailors.

“Look at him,” says a petty officer. “Someday I want to stand that straight and look that proud. Just standing there, he instills confidence and pride in the crew.”

Every week, about 50 new sailors report for duty aboard the Ranger. It’s part of Hobb’s job to talk with them during their week-long indoctrination about the Navy and shipboard life. “I tell them the Navy’s unique, because we’re the only military service that has the privileges of going to sea. I tell them what I expect of them while they’re aboard. I never have to tell them again,” says Hobbs.

“He is the Navy,” says a boot seaman. “A sailor’s sailor.”

A slightly saltier petty officer adds, “He’s not a lifer, but he’s in for life.”

Literally.

As the most senior enlisted man in the Navy, Hobbs’ sea-going savvy is the result of more than 41 years of continuous active duty. Although he’d different things to different people, Hobbs says he’s just being himself.

“I’m a sailor – a sea-going man,” he says. “I want to be where the action is to me, that’s aboard a ship at sea.

“I’m dedicated to the Navy. The Navy is not what I do. The Navy is what I am.”

Hobbs can’t remember making a conscious decision to join the Navy, “But for as long as I can remem-



ber, I knew I wanted to go to sea” he says.

His father served in the Army during World War I before returning to the Tennessee coal mines after the war.

“I knew I didn’t want to go into those mines,” he says. “I never did.”

Hobbs remembers seeing sailors coming to town. “They always seemed to get the girls,” he says. “And there is something about the uniform I liked.”

After dropping out of Wartburg High School in 1938, Hobbs quickly realized his error in not finishing school. But it wasn’t until 1975 that Hobbs finally earned his high school diploma through the Navy while stationed aboard the aircraft carrier USS Coral Sea.

After earning his able body seaman license from the Merchant Marine Academy in September 1941, he reported for active duty.

“Before I joined the Navy, I was mean,” he says. “I thought all there was in life was fist-fighting and whiskey-drinking. The Navy showed me there was more.”

After boot camp in San Diego, Hobbs got the action he was looking for – more than he bargained for – as the U.S. plunged into war after Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor.

Since then Hobbs has been around the world four times. He’s had duty aboard nine ships, including the heavy cruiser St. Paul and the battleship New York. His eight rows of service ribbons are reminders of the three wars spanned by his career.

In the early 50’s Hobbs married the former Virginia Jackson, a native of Virginia, then a Marine Corps sergeant. She is now retired from General Dynamics Corp. in San Diego.

“She copes very well,” says Hobbs. “Whether or not she understands...well I don’t think anyone really does. But she tries.”

Hobbs reported aboard the Ranger in January 1981. Last October, the ship returned from seven months in the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean. It was Hobbs’ 27th deployment.

In January he reenlisted for the 12th time, making him unique among only a handful of sailors allowed to remain on active duty beyond the 30-year retirement. To do so requires recurring special permission from the Naval Military Personnel Command in Washington D.C.

“I’m not ready for retirement,” he says. “I’m still healthy and able to do the job. I have no doubt I could go on deck right now and perform the basic seamanship skills of my job like I did 10 years ago.”

“I used to load five-inch projectiles faster than anyone in the fleet,” says Hobbs. “and I’m willing to challenge anyone today.”

In spite of his longevity, Hobbs hasn’t allowed his dedication to fade.

“Every day something happens that causes me to step back and look at the entire picture,” he says. “Such as the magnificence of his ship, I look at her size and all this steel, and say to myself, this shouldn’t really float.”

When underway, Hobbs’ favorite place is still the fo’c’sle. Located in the ship’s bow, it’s the natural habitat of boatswain’s mates. “It helps me see where I’m going,” says Hobbs.

But when the ship is in her homeport, he enjoys walking the hangar deck and looking at the city’s skyline. “I think about how much San Diego has changed since I first came here 41 years ago,” he says.

“But I haven’t really changed, and neither has the Navy.”

With a career that has spanned four decades, three wars and uncountable experiences, Hobbs doesn’t hesitate when asked what has been the best time of his life.

“Tomorrow.”



An SH-60B Seahawk helicopter assigned to the “Saberhawks” of Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron Light 47 flying the American flag and an HH-60H Seahawk helicopter assigned to the “Golden Falcons” of Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron 2 fly over the Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Mobile Bay and the Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Shoup during an air power demonstration. (U.S. Navy photo/Petty Officer 3rd Class Geoffrey Lewis)

Change comes to North Island again

*I*n January 1987 Kitty Hawk left a home she had known since 1961, causing the relocation of nearly 2,600 crewmembers and almost 2,100 dependents. This was the year the 80,000-ton aircraft carrier sailed to Philadelphia, ending a 25-year association with San Diego. As San Diego became “America’s Finest City,” Kitty Hawk had earned a reputation as one of America’s finest aircraft carriers.

Philadelphia became the carrier’s home for a SLEP overhaul intended to extend her life into the 21st century. The yard workers completely reworked and improved the propulsion machinery, and upgraded the hull, tanks, and piping systems. Among the many modifications and alterations to the ship were an additional radar, state of the art communications equipment, anti-missile defense systems, and improved aircraft launch, recovery, and support systems.

USS Kitty Hawk completed her SLEP, and returned to NAS North Island in December 1991.

The Naval Air Rework Facility held a groundbreaking ceremony on November 3, 1986, for a new Engineering Laboratory. The new \$6.7 million structure provided a modem, vibration-free, environmentally

controlled facility. Its primary features included electromagnetic and radiation shielding, increased power capacity, improved operational layout, and improved facilities for materials testing.

Advanced technologies in the Navy required the use of more sophisticated equipment. Additionally, the building provided more accurate mechanical and electrical standards measurements by NARF's Navy Primary Standards Laboratory which is accountable to the National Bureau of Standards.

On November 3, 1988, 600 people enjoyed a complimentary spaghetti meal at the NAS North Island Petty Officer's Club to celebrate its grand opening after renovations. Included in the improvements were 8,000 square feet of hardwood dance floor, a new bar area, new carpeting in the dining areas and lounge, new ceiling light fixtures, and royal blue dining chairs accompanying wooden tables, newly refinished by the Station Wood Hobby Shop.

To further enhance the interior, arched passageways and windows were added to the lounge, as well as an extra pool room. The large fireplace in the lounge sported a new marble hearth and fresh white mantelpiece. The newly painted white walls added the final touch.

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held November 30, 1988, to reopen the "new" NAS North Island Air Terminal, building 700. In fact, the entire building 700 was stripped of its walls, floors, roof, fixtures, and plumbing to make way for renovation. The only part left untouched was the steel support structure. The renovated terminal sported new walls, flooring, ceilings, paint, carpet, plumbing, windows, furniture, and baggage scanners. There was also a new counter area for passenger check in, a new cafeteria, and a mini-exchange.



USS Constellation (CV-64) at sea, circa 1988. Official U.S. Navy Photograph, from the collections of the Naval History and Heritage Command

The original air terminal was believed to date back as far as 1929 and may have originally been an Army mule barn. A popular myth among visitors (over 120,000 per year) to the former site was that the faint aroma of mules was still noticeable on warm summer days.

On December 5, 1988, NAS North Island opened the new Sea 'N' Air Golf Course clubhouse which now stands near the 17th hole. Although planned since the summer of 1985, construction work did not begin until spring of 1987. The facility featured a new Pro Shop, club storage area, men's and women's locker rooms, including showers, a 260-car parking lot, and staff office spaces.

The most dazzling inclusion in the new clubhouse was the 19th Hole Restaurant, capable of accommodating 160 customers inside and an additional 100 on the adjacent covered patio. Banquet facilities were also available.

The opening of the new clubhouse made room for another much needed facility. On February 15, 1989, a large crowd witnessed the grand opening of the All Hands Fitness Center in the former golf course clubhouse.

The center helped relieve the overcrowded Men's Fitness Center in building 281. The construction crew moved into high gear in December 1988, enlisting the aid of a crew of Seabees and Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) (formerly Recreational Services) maintenance personnel to literally gut the old clubhouse. Crews put forth an intensive, day-to-day effort to transform the structure into a modern mini-gym.

The Main Gate as it appears today came about because of four months of work between September and December 1988. The new gate featured three matching guard shacks with red tiled roofs.

Imagine working in a technical field in the 1980s out of a building built in 1918, which had seen few concessions to modern technology. That was the plight of the men and women working at NAS North Island's Branch Medical Clinic until July 8, 1990, when the new facility located on McCain Boulevard opened for business. The new building was outfitted with the latest technology and provided a clean, modern, and spacious environment in which to provide quality medical care.

The new clinic enabled the Station medical professionals to provide services not previously offered. For example, the new clinic boasted a physical therapy section which meant personnel stationed at NAS North Island no longer has to travel to Balboa Hospital to receive this treatment.

Another improvement was the inclusion of an audiology laboratory, formerly located in two trailers set up outside the old clinic. Finally, with over 5,000 square feet more than the old clinic, the facility provided more space in waiting areas, wider halls, and vaulted ceilings. These added a more comfortable appearance and made waits more pleasant.

Air Anti-Submarine Squadron Thirty-Five (VS-35) returned to active duty on February 6, 1987. Established January 3, 1961, VS-35 came to NAS North Island in June of the same year upon receiving its first S-2 "Tracker" aircraft.

The squadron participated in actual combat operations in the Gulf of Tonkin, maintaining surface and subsurface surveillance during Vietnam. It also took part in the space program on board the USS Hornet in August 1966, by aiding in the recovery of the first Apollo capsule.

In September 1969, VS-35 became a part of Carrier Anti-Submarine Air Group Fifty-Three, deploying on Ticonderoga. In May 1973, VS-35 received notification of its disestablishment, and by June 11, 1973, dispersal of material and personnel was completed.

In 1976, VS-35 was reestablished and was the 12th and final operational VS squadron to transition to the S-3 "Viking" aircraft. Lack of funds caused activity in organizing the command to terminate in Decem-



A right side view of an Air Anti-submarine Squadron 35 (VS-35) S-3A Viking aircraft parked on the flight line. Photo by Douglas D. Olson

ber 1976, and the command was again disestablished on March 30, 1977.

The newest rebirth of officially began on September 30, 1986, when Cdr. Mike Kaczmarek assumed the duty of Officer in Charge of Preestablishment Detachment VS-35. A significant milestone was also achieved on November 14, 1986, when S-3A aircraft bureau number 160596 was transferred from the “Shamrocks” of VS-41 to the “Boomerangs” of VS-35.

Upon establishment on March 3, 1987, VS-35 became an integral part of Carrier Air Wing Ten.

Shortly after VS-35 came to NAS North Island, Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron Sixteen (HS-16) followed. Commissioned on March 10, 1987, the new unit brought six more H-3 “Sea King” helicopters to the Station.

With approximately 170 officers and enlisted, HS-16 was a welcome addition to Air Wing Ten. Unfortunately, it was a short-lived rebirth, since VS-35 and HS-16 were disestablished again in 1988.

The final new squadron to join NAS North Island in 1987 was Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron Light Forty-Seven (HSL-47), commissioned on September 25. The new squadron brought with it the SH-60B “Seahawk” to add to NAS North Island’s arsenal of anti- submarine weapons. With its LAMPS MARK III system, the “Seahawk” can track submarines and provide over-the-horizon targeting information. The third LAMPS MARK III squadron on the West Coast, HSL-47 also performed the traditional missions of search and rescue, medical evacuation, and vertical replenishment.

The Navy’s number one operational concern has always been safety. Airplane, ships, and submarines can be extremely dangerous, and sailors continuously receive extensive training aimed at preventing acci-

dents. In this respect, NAS North Island has never been different from any other command. Sailor's lives have always been valued, and the Station's safety record shows it.

Navy and Marine Corps aviators made 1988 the safest year in Naval Aviation. The major accident ("A" category) rate was 216 mishaps per 100,000 flight hours, the lowest rate ever recorded in Naval Aviation.

As of 1991, NAS North Island boasted 21 years of flying without a class "A" accident and 37,000 flight hours since the last mishap. All the squadrons attached to the Station had impressive flying records; two which stood out were HC-3 and VS-33. The "Packrats" had 18 consecutive years without a class "A" accident, while the "Screwbirds" had not had a class "A" accident since they were established in 1960.

On October 8, 1988, USS Independence arrived at its new homeport of NAS North Island. With ship's company embarked, the carrier left Norfolk, VA, its homeport of 29 years, for San Diego on August 15, sailing around South America's Cape Horn and making selected port calls.

"Freedom's Flagship" had just completed a 37-month overhaul at the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard. Essentially rebuilt from the keel up, the SLEP gave Independence the most advanced carrier combat technology in the Pacific Fleet and will allow the ship to serve well into the 21st century.

Unfortunately, Independence's stay at NAS North Island was a short one. She received orders to replace the aging Midway and in the fall of 1991 slipped away from the quay wall, departing for Yokosuka, Japan, along with VS-27, the first S-2 squadron to be forward deployed in Japan.



Aircraft Carrier USS Independence departs San Diego.

The Screwbird at the 29 hold short

Sea Story first-hand account by, Commander (retired) Dan “Millhouse” Vogel

*I*t is not often that you can feel like you made a personal and lasting impact on a Naval Air Station, but I know that I can say that when it comes to NASNI, I did. I'm not sure if that impact has faded or disappeared in time. Unfortunately, if it is still there it is one of the few remaining signs of the glory days of S-3 operations out of NASNI, when our aircraft was one of the few that were allowed to take off of Runway 29 staring right at the ridge line of Point Loma before making our left turnout toward the Pacific Ocean.

The story takes place in between my first and second deployment with VS-33. Based on the personalities involved I would say it happened sometime in 1998. At the time, the CVW-9 ASW officer was an S-3 pilot, LCDR Jon “Jethro” Shaper. Incidentally, Jethro is one of those guys where not that many people in the air wing knew what his real first name was. He looked like Jethro Clampett and so that's just what he was. He was a good stick and to keep current on the S-3 he would come down from Lemoore and fly with us from time to time. Among some of his claims was that he had been one of the guys that helped end the brief and illustrious career of the North Island Runway 29 Carrier Break when he came in so low and fast (hard to believe in a Hoover) that he heard in the background of the controllers call to climb, another voice exclaim, “Look at that a-hole!” Jethro and I had flown on my first deployment, including one memorable time where he uttered the phrase no first cruise NFO wants to hear from a pilot, “Hey man, watch this!” That's a different story though.

I was in the front right seat on one of Jethro's currency stints with us back at NASNI. We taxied out to the hold short and as we got there, he made a gesture with his hand and pointed out to me that there was a broken submarine with a lightning bolt painted in black paint right at the hold short. It was the same look as the broken sub on the old VS-21 patch before the re-designation from AIRASRON-21 to SEA-CONRON-21 changed the design. According to Jethro, the night before the squadron departed NASNI to be forward deployed in Japan as part of CVW-5, a younger Jethro had gone out to the hold short and painted this logo personally. He then followed this history lesson up with, “None of you JOs in VS-33 would have the balls to do something like that now,” or words to that effect. I looked at him and basically



A U.S. Navy Lockheed S-3A Viking aircraft

replied that if he was going to challenge Screwbird JOPA like that there would have to be a response and I took it as a personal challenge. I can't remember if he said anything back.

After returning later that day I approached the best artist we had in the squadron at the time, AT2 Hall and relayed the challenge. Besides being a good Avionics Tech, Petty Officer Hall was our go to artist for helmet artwork, CAG bird tail decorations, etc. We quickly hatched a plan and went down to the Airframer shop to enlist a few other accomplices who I can no longer recall exactly and so I won't implicate anyone incorrectly. We sat down, I relayed the story again and then told them the size wasn't as big as the Screwbird on our tail, but it was close. However, we would probably need a new stencil for the task. The airframers and Hall agreed to generate the stencil and I agreed to go purchase the required spray paint. We then just needed to wait for the right time, but I had a plan for that.



As the next time I had Squadron Duty Officer (SDO) approached I got in touch with my co-conspirators. My plan was to wait a few hours after all the squadron's sorties were over and the airfield had pretty much shut down for the night. I lived too far away to go home, so I was going to be spending the night on base in the BOQ room that the squadron had permanently checked out to us for just such occasions. That meant that there was plenty of time to carry out the mission after things were good and quiet.

The night of squadron ops while I was SDO came and went and after I was done with all of the tasks with securing the watch, I turned over the watch to my enlisted Assistant SDO and went downstairs to talk with AT2 Hall and the two airframers. We agreed to meet in the parking lot outside of Building 797 where the simulators were. We all would change into dark civilian clothes in about 30 minutes and then proceed to the hold short from there. Luckily for us, it was a pretty dark night, but there was enough ambient light around the airfield that it didn't look like we were going to need flashlights for our handiwork. Also, these were the days before 9-11 and so we weren't too worried about security around the airfield.

We all met up in the parking lot with the stencil and spray paint. After a quick look to see if anything was stirring on the airfield flight lines or up in the we went out the hold short from the edge of the parking lot "Animal House" style, all the while waiting for something to go wrong with the plan. Could it really be this simple? After finding the VS-21 submarine the stencil was slapped onto the pavement and about 30 seconds later there was a brand new VS-33 World Famous and Internationally Travelled Screwbird right next to it. The retreat back to our cars was uneventful and we quickly dispersed for the rest of the night.

My next flight out I made sure to tell the pilot that I wanted to check out something at the hold short. Even if we got a cleared for takeoff prior to reaching the hold short, I wanted us to take our time as we taxied over so I could look for something. I was glad to see that in the light of day our work looked just as good as it had the night we did it. At this point I showed the pilot the new addition and word was officially out. I made sure to coordinate with our scheduler so that Jethro's next currency flight would be with me. When it occurred I made sure to point out that his challenge had been accepted and met. I also pointed out that our Screwbird looked much newer than the broken sub, what with him being an ancient Lieutenant Commander.

I believe a few other squadrons had their logos show up at some point as well, but I honestly can't remember. I just remember that our Combat Ready Red Gooney Bird was the second one to grace 29's hold short line.