

## History of Naval Aviation Outline

### 1911-1921

- 8 May 1911: Capt. Washing Irving Chambers prepares contract specifications for the Navy's first aircraft. "Official" beginning of Naval Aviation.
- 1 July 1911: Lt. Theodore Ellyson becomes the first Navy officer to fly a Navy aircraft.
- 22 May 1912: Marine 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Alfred Cunningham reports to Annapolis for flight training.
- 20 Jan 1914: First aviation personnel arrive at Pensacola, Fla.
- April 1914: First American aircraft to fly under combat conditions in Veracruz, Mexico.
- Naval Aviation expands greatly in World War I.
- 22 Mar 1917: First Coast Guard aviators graduate from Pensacola Naval Aviation Training School.
- 24 Sept 1918: Lt.j.g. David S. Ingalls becomes U.S. naval aviation's first fighter ace.
- May 1919: First air crossing of the Atlantic Ocean, by the Navy's NC-4 flying boat.
- 1921: Navy Bureau of Aeronautics established.

### 1921-1931

- 1922: Navy commissions first aircraft carrier, USS LANGLEY.
- 26 Oct 1922: Lt. Cmdr. Godfrey Chevalier records the first landing onboard LANGLEY.
- 1923: Intro of rigid airship with the commissioning of USS SHENANDOAH.
- 9 May 1926: Lt. Cmdr. Richard E. Boyd makes first flight over North Pole.
- 2 July 1926: Distinguished Flying Cross is authorized by Congress.
- 6 Jan 1928: Marine Lt. Christian Schilt rescues 18 Marines by air while under fire in Nicaragua. Receives Medal of Honor.
- 29 Nov 1929: Cmdr. Richard E. Byrd makes first flight over South Pole.

### 1931-1941

- 22 Jan 1931: Navy orders first autogyro, the XOP-1, a forerunner of the modern day helo.
- 2 Nov 1931: Marine aircraft serve on carriers for the first time.
- 1934: First carrier built from the keel up, USS RANGER.
- 30 July 1935: The first blind landing aboard a carrier was made aboard LANGLEY by Lt. Frank Akers.
- YORKTOWN class carriers designed and built.
- Sept 1939: Neutrality Patrol initiated, tracking movements of belligerents in the Atlantic.
- 7 Dec 1941: Japanese Navy attack the naval base at Pearl Harbor sinking or damaging eight battleships.

### 1941-1951

- 18 Apr 1942: Aircraft launch from USS HORNET (CV 8) to conduct the first attack on Japan.
- 7-8 May 1942: US and Japanese aircraft carriers fight the Battle of the Coral Sea, the first naval engagement in history in which ships of the opposing forces do not come within sight of one another.
- 3-6 June 1942: US Navy carrier aircraft sink four Imperial Japanese Navy aircraft carriers and a heavy cruiser, in the decisive Battle of Midway.
- 26 Aug 1942: In combat over Guadalcanal, Capt. Marion E. Carl becomes the first Marine ace.
- 1943: Navy takes delivery of new aircraft, including F6F Hellcat, F4U Corsair and SB2C Helldiver.
- 1943: New generation of fast attack carriers, the ESSEX Class.
- 16 Jan 1944: Coast Guard Lt. j.g. Stewart Graham makes the first helicopter take off from and landing aboard a ship on high seas.
- 29 Sep 1946: A P2V-1 Neptune patrol aircraft completes record-setting nonstop flight of 11,235.6 miles in 55 hours and 17 minutes.
- 30 Oct 1946: The Navy successfully test its first ejection seat, in a JD-1, at Lakehurst, N.J.
- 1949: "Revolt of the Admirals"- USAF belief that Naval Aviation was not required if the Air Force had a force of strategic bombers.
- 1950: Debate silenced with invasion of South Korea by North Korea. Rapidly deploying 7<sup>th</sup> Fleet carriers and Marine aviation support.

- 4 Dec 1950: Ens. Jesse Brown, Navy's first black aviator, crash lands in Korea. He would receive the Distinguished Flying Cross posthumously. Lt.j.g. Thomas Hudner, who crash landed to try to save him, would receive the Medal of Honor.

### **1951-1961**

- Korea was first operational test of jets and helicopters in a wartime environment.
- 1 May 1951: AD Skyraiders from USS PRINCETON (CV 37) successfully attack the Hwacheon Dam with torpedoes.
- Post-Korean War: Innovations such as the steam catapult, angled flight decks and mirror landing systems help ensure a successful transition to jet aircraft.
- 20 Mar 1953: Airship ZP2N-1 sets world distance record of 9448 miles in 264 hours.
- Mid-50s: Supersonic and doublesonic speeds achieved by naval aircraft.
- 1 Oct 1955: USS FORRESTAL (CV 59), the first "super carrier," commissioned.
- Airborne Early Warning and Anti-Submarine Warfare mark two mission areas that play a pivotal part of Cold War operations.
- 5 May 1961: Cmdr. Alan B. Shepard, Jr. becomes the first American in space aboard *Freedom 7*.
- May 1961: Navy marks Naval Aviation's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.
- 26 Aug 1961: USS IWO JIMA (LPH 2) the first "helicopter carrier" amphibious ship built from the keel up, commissioned.
- 25 Nov 1961: USS ENTERPRISE (CVN 65), the world's first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier, commissioned.

### **1962-1971**

- 1962: P-3 Orion enters service.
- Feb 1962: Lt. Col. John H. Glenn, USMC, becomes first American to orbit the earth.
- April 1962: Naval Aviation's involvement in the Vietnam War began.
- Oct 1962: Naval Aviation participated in Cuban Missile Crisis with sea/air blockade of Cuba with carrier aircraft and land-based patrol assets.
- 1963: A-6 Intruder enters service.
- 5 Aug 1964: In retaliation for Tonkin Gulf incidents, first naval air strikes against Vietnam take place with aircraft from CONSTELLATION and TICONDEROGA.
- 26 Mar 1965: Aircraft from 7<sup>th</sup> fleet begin systematic bombing of military targets in North Vietnam. The campaign would continue until halted in Nov 1968.
- 1966: CH-53 Sea Stallion enters service.
- 1967: AH-1 HueyCobra enters service.
- 21 July 1969: Astronaut Neil Armstrong, former naval aviator, becomes first human to set foot on the surface of the moon.

### **1971-1980**

- Continued involvement in Vietnam by naval aviation assets.
- 1971: New capability for Marines with acceptance of first AV-8A Harrier.
- 1972: Last man on moon, Naval Aviator Gene Cernan.
- 25 May 1973: Skylab II, carrying an all-Navy crew, begin repairs to the Skylab station that had been damaged during initial launch and deployment.
- 1974: F-14 Tomcat enters service.
- 1974: S-3 Viking enters service.
- 22 Feb 1974: Lt. j.g. Barbara Ann Allen becomes the first woman to be designated as a naval aviator.
- 12 Apr 1975: Navy Helos evacuate hundreds of American from the Cambodian capital of Phnom Penh. In the coming weeks, Navy and Marine aircraft and ship evacuate thousands of refugees as the Cambodian and South Vietnamese regimes collapse.

- 3 May 1975: USS NIMITZ (CVN 68) commissioned.

### **1981-1991**

- 1981: F-14 Tomcats shoot down two Libyan Su-22s over the Med.
- 12 April 1981: During the first flight of the space shuttle, naval aviators are at the controls.
- 1983: F/A-18 Hornet enters service.
- 1984: SH-60 enters service.
- May 1986: Naval Aviation Celebrates 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in May 1986.
- 18 April 1988: Navy aircraft from ENTERPRISE sink Iranian frigate and damage another during OPERATION PRAYING MANTIS in Arabian Gulf, the largest US naval engagement since WWII.
- 1989: F-14 Tomcats shoot down two Libyan MiG-23 over the Med.
- Aug 1990: Military buildup begins in support of OPERATION DESERT SHIELD. Carriers on station.
- 6 Oct 1990: Coast Guard's first astronaut, Cmdr. Bruce Melnick, makes his first space flight.

### **1991-2001**

- 16 Jan 1991: OPERATION DESERT STORM begins as Navy and Marine aircraft participate in the 5-week long air campaign and subsequent 100-hour ground war to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi control.
- 9 Dec 1992: Helos from TRIPOLI land Marines at Mogadishu, Somalia, as OPERATION RESTORE HOPE begins.
- Aug 1995: OPERATION DELIBERATE FORCE commences. Significant Naval Aviation role.
- 16 Dec 1998: Navy aircraft from ENTERPRISE and VINSON spearhead attacks on Iraq in OPERATION DESERT FOX.
- 24 Mar 1999: Aircraft from ROOSEVELT and KEARSARGE participate in Operation Allied Force, the 3-month long bombing campaign of Kosovo.
- 1999: F/A-18 Super Hornet enters service.

### **2001-2011**

- Oct 2001: OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM commences, Naval Aviation plays major role since no land basing available in early parts of war.
- 25 Nov 2001: In the longest amphibious aerial assault in history, Marine ground units are airlifted from Arabian Sea to Kandahar, Afghanistan, as the Taliban regime collapses.
- March 2003: OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM commences. Naval Aviation plays major role.
- 7 Nov 2004: Marine Aircraft Group 39 supports Marine and Army ground forces during the Second Battle of Fallujah.
- 30 Aug 2005: Numerous ships and aircraft assist with disaster relief in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.
- 2007: MV-22 Osprey enters service.
- 10 Jan 2009: USS GEORGE HW BUSH (CVN 77) commissioned.
- 2009: Keel laid for next generation of carrier, the FORD class.
- 12 Jan 2010: Navy and Marine ships and aircraft bring humanitarian relief in response to a massive earthquake in Haiti that kills more than 230,000.

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