



John R. Dewenter, Captain USN (Ret.)

“Jack”

Date of Designation: 19 Dec 1947 NA# 26179

Active Duty: 6/45 to 1/50, 10/50 to 6/78

Total Flight Hours: 4,289

Carrier Landings: Fixed Wing - 400

Combat Tours:

Korea: VF-781, 6/2/51-11/28/51, USS *Bon Homme Richard* (F9F-2B)

Vietnam: VA-23, 4/10/65-6/27/65 USS *Midway* (A-4E)

Vietnam: CVW-14, 7/9/67-7/11/67 USS *Constellation* (A-4C)

Vietnam: CVW-17, 7/23/67-7/29/67 USS *Forrestal* (A-4E, F-4B)

Total Combat Missions: 125 (65 F9F-2B, 1 F-4B, 59 A-4C A-4E)

Commands:

CO VA-23, USS *Midway* (CVA-41) NAS Lemoore. 7/64-7/65 (A-4)

Commander CVW-17, USS *Forrestal* (CVA-59), NAS Oceana 12/66-12/67 (F-4B, A-4E, A-6A, A-3 E-2A)

CO, USS *Cleveland* (LPD-7) 10/70-8/71 (A-4E)

Awards:

2 Legion of Merit

2 Distinguished Flying Crosses (Combat/Individual)

Bronze Star

8 Air Medals (Combat/Strike-flight)

Assortment of Eleven Other Medals/Commendations, etc.

Duty Assignment Chronology

- 7/45-7/46 Navy V-5 College Training.
- 8/46-5/48 NavAirTrn., Dallas, Ottumwa, Corpus Christi, Pensacola, Jacksonville (N2S, SNJ, PBY, SNB, TBM).
- 7/48-12/48 FASRON 9, San Diego (Awaiting Assignment) (F8F, F6F, TBM, SNJ).
- 12/48-4/49 VA-214, NAS Seattle (squadron decommissioned). (TBM, F6F, SNJ, PB4Y-2).
- 4/49-1/50 VF-51, NAS San Diego (F9F, TO-1, F4U-4, SNJ, SNB).



- 1/50-10/50 Inactive Duty, VF-782 NAS Los Alamitos (F6F, SNJ).
- 10/50-1/52 VF-781, USS *Bon Homme Richard* (CVA-31) (F9F-2B, F4U-4 Combat Korea).
- 1/52-6/53 Naval Language School (Chinese) (F9F-4, F8F, F6F, SNB).
- 6/53-12/53 Naval Intelligence School (F8F, F6F, SNB).
- 2/54-4/54 COMNAVFE, Air Intel Officer (SNB).
- 5/54-6/55 United Nations Command Military Armistice Commission/Korea, Chinese Interpreter/Chief Translation Section (SNB, L-19).
- 7/55-6/56 VF-93 Admin Officer, NAS Alameda USS *Oriskany* (CVA-34) (F9F-8, TV-2).
- 6/56-4/57 COMFAIRWESTPAC Aide and Flag Lt., NAS Atsugi (F9F-8, TF, R4D, WV-2, R5D-2, F3D, P5M, A3D, AJ, SNB).
- 4/57-8/57 COMCARDIV 5 Aide and Flag Lt., USS *Bennington* (CVA-20) (TV-2, SNB).
- 10/57-11/57 ATU-206 Instructor, NAS Pensacola Blue Angel tryouts (F9F-8, SNB).
- 11/57-6/60 Blue Angels Admin/Ops. (F11F-1, F9F-8, TV-2).
- 9/60-11/61 CINCLANTFLT Aide to Deputy CINCLANT/CINCLANTFLT (S2F-1, T2V-1, UO-1, R4Y, T-28, F9F-8T, UF-2).
- 11/61-5/62 VA-125 Replacement Pilot Training, NAS Lemoore (F9F-8T, A4D-1/2/2N).
- 5/62-6/63 CAG-19 OPS Off., USS *Bon Homme Richard* (CVA-31) (A4D-2C/N, A3B, TF-9J).
- 6/63-7/65 VA-23 XO/CO, USS *Midway* (CVA-41) (A4E/C Combat Vietnam).
- 7/65-7/66 US Army War College (U-6A UC-45)
- 8/66-12/66 COMNAVAIRLANT Replacement Pilot Training (F-4B, TF-9J, TA-4F, A-4E/C).
- 12/66-12/67 CVW-17 Air Wing Commander, USS *Forrestal* (CVA-59) (F-4B, A-4E/C, A-6A, A3 E-2A Combat Vietnam).
- 1/68-7/69 CNO OP-614B Politico-Military Affairs, Pentagon (U-11A, US-2B).
- 8/69-7/70 National War College.

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9/70-8/71 CO, USS *Cleveland* (LPD-7) WestPac (A-4E).
 9/71-8/72 Council on Foreign Relations, NYC Fellowship
 9/72-7/74 State Department, Deputy Director for International Security Operations.
 8/74-5/75 DIA, Attaché Training and Language Refresher.
 6/75-6/78 Def. and Naval Liaison Officer, Hong Kong
 7/78 Retired from active duty.



Summary of Significant Career Events

- (1) 4/49-1/50. Closed out first active duty tour assigned to Navy's first West Coast jet squadron, VF-51, flying the F9F-3 (also TO-1/jet transition, F4U-4, SNJ, SNB.) Volunteered for return to active duty June 1950, recalled October 1950 and joined VF-781, the only 100% volunteer reserve squadron. Flew Corsairs until we received F9F-2B for Korean deployment aboard USS *Bon Homme Richard*.
- (2) 9 January 1951, NAS Miramar. Dead-stick landing in F9F-2B after low altitude flame-out near NAS Miramar.
- (3) July 1955. Joined VF-93 at NAS Alameda as the F9F-8 fighter squadron began early transition to Special Weapons Delivery mission, pioneering jet low level navigation and delivery techniques. Deployed to WestPac aboard USS *Oriskany* fully integrated into SIOP. Believe this was last swept wing deployment on straight deck carrier. Before cruise, on 23 January 1956, ditched F9F-8 in San Francisco Bay after flame-out near NAS Alameda. Was informed by OpNav representative that this was first successful ditching of swept wing jet in water.
- (4) November 1957. Joined the Blue Angels flying No. 5, Solo Lead, and No. 4, Slot. The first year the solos introduced new maneuver, the "Back-to-Back," involving one aircraft inverted and the second flying close wing position right-side-up. A few seasons later this was also incorporated into the diamond.
- (5) 2 August 1957. Blue Angel show for Clarence, N.Y. just east of Buffalo. At 8,000 ft over show site, on run-in for opener, experienced beginning of main bearing failure. While attempting to reach NAS Niagara engine running rough,

losing power, seized and flamed out. Rather than eject over heavily populated Buffalo suburbs attempted straight-in, dead stick landing with fully fueled, heavy F11F on short runway at Buffalo International Airport. Touched down on "landing" end of runway, but came to rest on apron of gas station across Gennessy Blvd busy with Saturday afternoon traffic. Only damage was to the aircraft, but the accident became a major media event - favorable to Navy. Most important of many items of correspondence received was the following:

FM CNO

TO NAS NIAGARA

FOR LT JOHN R DEWENTER USN X INFORMATION
 CDR EDWARD HOLLEY USN FROM ADM BURKE X
 YOUR MAGNIFICENT ACTION THIS AFTERNOON
 IN LANDING YOUR AIRCRAFT RATHER THAN
 HAZARDING THE LIVES OF THE CIVILIAN POPULACE
 REFLECTS THE HIGHEST CREDIT ON YOURSELF THE
 BLUE ANGELS AND THE NAVY X WELL DONE.

- (6) 1966 Organized, commissioned and trained new air wing, CVW-17, for USS *Forrestal* deployment to Vietnam.
- (7) 29 July 1967. Tragedy strikes. As CAG, had been out on the early morning coordinated strike. While debriefing in the Air Intelligence spaces just below flight deck heard the chilling announcement on 1MC, "Fire, fire, fire on the flight deck aft!" The *Forrestal* Fire, the worst naval disaster since World War II, took 134 lives and about 30 aircraft and terminated a very short combat tour for ship and air wing.
- (8) Limited Vietnam Combat: Standard 24-month squadron XO/CO rotation left me only two months for first Vietnam combat tour. *Forrestal* Fire - only one week for CAG combat tour.
- (9) 11 to 25 January 1971. USS *Cleveland* (LPD-7) played key role in, at that time, an extremely sensitive and highly classified operation in support of MACV and South Vietnamese (ARVN) incursion into Cambodia. Deputy Commanding General MACV and his staff made their home aboard USS *Cleveland* as their Command Center. As CO, operated ship inside Sihanoukville Bay, Cambodia. as a staging platform for army gunships and other helos with ships personnel refueling and rearming the helos. Conned ship in and out of the bay each night at varying hours passing through its long, narrow entrance at top speed, darkened ship and general quarters as a precaution should unfriendly forces have moved into area and occupied shoreline. Deputy Commanding General, MACV, wrote in part: "Responding on short notice to a heavy and demanding air operations schedule with Cobra gunships and other aircraft not normally flown from CLEVELAND's decks..."
- (10) 3 June 1974. Legion of Merit, Citation: "service as Deputy Director of International Security Operations Department of State...responsible for a number of complex and highly sensitive National Security Council directives bearing on the Law of the Sea, and formulating policy recommendations in such broad areas as the Indian Ocean,
 - Continued -
 Persian Gulf, the Western Pacific, and the Mediterranean and

Caribbean Seas...official member of the U.S delegation in the highly important negotiations with the Soviet Union on military incidents at sea”

(11) 27 April 1978. Legion of Merit (2nd Award), Citation: “As the United States Defense Liaison Officer to the British Crown Colony of Hong Kong...support of U.S. Navy Fleet operations in the Pacific...fulfillment of priority national requirements concerning the People’s Republic of China during an especially critical time in the United States relations with that nation.” The first U.S. active duty military officer to be allowed into the PRC (May 1978).

Significant Academic Activities:

(1) National War College, Army War College, Navy Language School (Chinese Mandarin, intensive 18 mos course), Military Fellow at Council on Foreign Relations, Articles published in Foreign Affairs quarterly, Naval Institute Proceedings. Bachelors and Masters Degrees from George Washington University.

Post Retirement Activities:

1978 to 1980. Vice President of the National Council for US-China Trade, Washington, DC.

1980 to 1987 Beijing Representative for FMC Corporation, Vice President, FMC Far East. Ltd.