



Climbing in MIG-17 1968

J. Michael Welch, Captain, USN (Ret.)
 “Mike”

Date of Designation: 7 Dec. 1962 NA# V-19640

Dates of Active Duty: 7 Jun. 1961-30 Sep. 1990

Total Flight Hours: 3,642

Carrier/Ship Landings: Fixed wing: 754

Approximate Flight Hours:

Jet: 3,432 Prop: 208 VA/VF: 3,192 VT: 342
 Helo: 2 MIG -17: 13

Combat Tours:

Vietnam: VF-53, Apr.-Nov. 1964, USS *Ticonderoga* (F8E)
 Vietnam: VF-53, Sep. 1965-May 1966, USS *Ticonderoga*, (F8E)
 Vietnam: VF-191, Jun.-Dec. 1970, USS *Oriskany* (F8J)
 Vietnam: VF-191, Jun.-Dec. 1971, USS *Oriskany* (F8J)
 Total Combat Missions: 227 (F8E/J)

Aviation Commands:

CO VF-33, Dec. 1974-Jun. 1976 (F4J)
 CO VX-4, Jan 1983-Jun. 1984 (F4, F-14, F/A-18)
 CO NAS Patuxent River, Jul. 1984-Jun. 1986 (F-4, F-14, P-3, SH-3, plus many others).

Combat Awards:

14 Air Medals
 Two Navy Commendation Medals w/combat “V”

Duty Assignment Chronology

7/57-6/61 Midshipman, US Naval Academy (T-34, T-28, A-3).
 9/61-12/62 CNATRA, Student Naval Aviator, Pensacola, Meridian, Kingsville (T-34, T-2, F-9, F-11).
 1/63-5/63 Aviation Maintenance Officer School, Memphis, TN.



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6/63-12/63 VF-174, Replacement Pilot, Cecil Field (F-8).
 12/63-6/66 VF-53, Line Officer, A/C Division Officer, Miramar, CA. (F-8).
 6/66-10/69 VX-4, Project Officer, Pt. Mugu (F-8, F-4, T-33, C-45, MIG-17).
 11/69-12/69 VF-124, Replacement Pilot, Miramar (F-8).
 12/69-1/72 VF-191, Admin Officer, Maintenance Officer, Operations Officer, Miramar, CA. (F-8).
 2/72-4/73 BUPERS, Aviation Officer Detailer, Washington, D.C. (T-33).
 5/73-9/73 VF-101, Replacement Pilot, Oceana (F-4).
 10/73-3/76 VF-33, XO/CO, Oceana (F-4).
 4/76-5/79 COMNAVCRCUITCOM, Director, Aviation Officer Recruiting, Washington, D.C. (T-34).
 6/79-12/80 USS *America*, XO, Norfolk, VA.
 1/81-5/81 COMNAVAIRLANT, Initiated AIRLANT Energy Conservation Program.
 6/81-12/82 OPNAV, OP-962B, Systems Analysis Division, Deputy to Head, Strike Warfare Branch, Washington, D.C. (A-4).
 1/83-6/84 VX-4, CO, Pt. Mugu, CA. (F-4, F-14, F/A-18).
 7/84-6/86 NAS Patuxent River, CO (F-4, F-14, P-3, SH-3, plus others).
 6/86-4/88 OPNAV, OP-13B/OP-13, Deputy Director then Director, Military Personnel Plans and Policy Division, Washington, D.C.
 4/88-90 OPNAV, OP-76, Director, Electronic Warfare, C3I, and Space Warfare Division, Washington, D.C.

Summary of Significant Career Events

- (1) Project Officer for test/evaluation and tactics development for first ever Electronic Warfare equipment installed in the F-8. (Project Shoehorn.)
- (2) Project Officer for test/evaluation and tactics development for air-to-ground ordnance delivery from the F-8, including the first night live bomb deliveries.

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Summary of Significant Career Events continued

(3) First Model Manager of the F-8 Tactical Manual. Directed and oversaw the writing, editing, publishing and distribution of the first edition. Despite strong objections from the “technical” community successfully convinced higher authority to produce a user friendly manual for the fighter pilot in fighter pilot language.

(4) One of three USN aviators to pilot the MIG-17 (13 hours) in Project “Have Drill” to exploit vulnerable characteristics of the MIG-17 and develop counter tactics for USN tactical aircraft.

(5) Screened for “Bobby-Sox” command (VF-33) as a LCDR.

(6) As Director of Aviation Officer Recruiting on the staff of Commander, Navy Recruiting Command, was the “de facto” CO of a squadron of 51 T-34’s located at 43 locations throughout the USA. The program, to screen the aeronautical adaptability of potential flight students, was accident and incident free during this three year tour.

(7) In 18 months as CO of VX-4 the squadron was accident and incident free. As noted in the COMNAVAIRPAC Safety Award, the feat was noteworthy in that VX-4 had Navy and Marine aviators, Air Force pilots and Royal Navy pilots onboard, most of them flying all three assigned aircraft---F-4, F-14 and F/A-18.

(8) Flew F-4’s, F-14’S and F/A-18’s as CO of VX-4, including all three on the day of the change of command.

(9) While CO of NAS Pax River flew F-4’s, F-14’s, P-3’s, SH-3’s and anything else that was available.

(10) In 1969 was selected for membership in the Society of Experimental Test Pilots. One of the very few ever selected who never attended a formal Test Pilot School.

(11) Completed 29+ years of active duty incident and accident free. The landings equal the takeoffs.

(12) In retirement, with my wife, Marguerite, sailed our 38 foot sailboat around the world. We left Annapolis in 1998 and returned to Annapolis in 2012 via the Caribbean, Panama Canal, Pacific, Indian, Red Sea, Suez Canal, Mediterranean and the Atlantic.