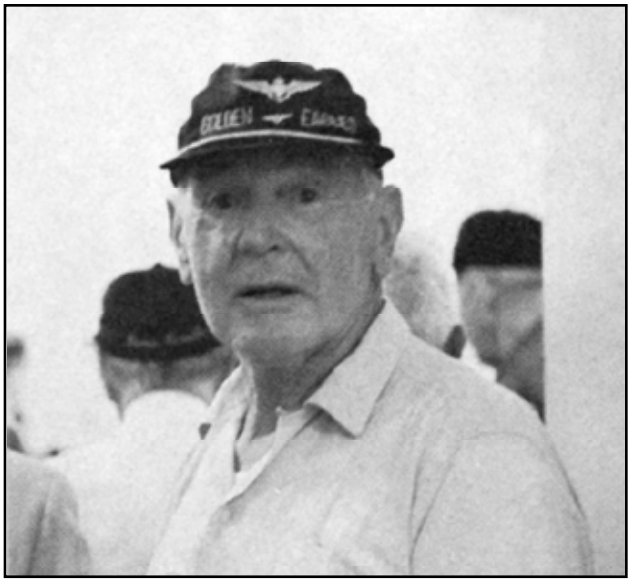

Patrick J. Byrne, CDR, USN
"Pappy"

Date of Designation: 1920 Navy Pilot #10

Flight Hours: 22,600+

The last page of a Navy legend will be written this month, March 1958. On Monday, March 31, 1958, Chief Boatswain Patrick J. "Pappy" Byrne, USN of Rumson, New Jersey, the "grand old man of Naval Aviation" will don his Navy wings for the last time. He will retire at the Naval Air Station, Lakehurst, New Jersey, after a long and distinguished career which began on December 14, 1917.

Chief Boatswain Byrne, who has been flying Navy aircraft for 40 years, has logged more hours of flight time than anyone else in the Armed Forces. He has flown over 140 different types of aircraft for a total of over 22,600 hours, spending over two years and seven months of his life in the air. But of greater importance has been his pioneering work in Naval aviation, particularly in the field of seaplanes. Byrne established or helped to establish practically every U. S. seaplane base in the world, and laid out for the Navy and commercial airlines the world's major seaplane routes. A former commanding officer, Captain D. L. Mills, USN, now retired, said of Byrne that be "is without peer in the field of flying boats." For his outstanding service to the Government Byrne, in January 1955, received the Legion of Merit.

Still flying at the age of 62, Byrne is now 'the Operations Duty Officer at the Lakehurst Naval Air Station. He is in charge of landing and take-off operations there.

Byrne, whose list of old flying friends of years gone by reads like a portion of the admirals' register, is a legendary figure in the Navy. For years now, Navy pilots have learned about him long before they ever met him.

After receiving his Navy training as a machinist mate in 1918, Chief Boatswain Byrne flew as co-pilot, plane captain and signalman with the seaplane patrol units based at U. S. Naval Air Station, Norfolk, Virginia.

In 1919, he was ordered to the first Fleet Air Detachment in the Navy, aboard the flagship USS *Shawmut*. This unit, flew the first aerial flights in the Caribbean Sea area, conducting the first aerial maneuvers with the fleet.

In 1920 Byrne graduated from flight training with the first class of enlisted men, and was designated Naval Aviation Pilot #10. A shipmate in that first class was the late Floyd Bennett for whom the Long Island Navy field is named. As pilot #10: he instructed at the Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida, for two years.

In 1922 he was assigned to the USS *Wright*, where he served as pilot for Patrol and Scouting Squadron ONE. He then served aboard the USS *Langley*, the Navy's first aircraft carrier. His next assignment was aboard the cruiser, USS *Richmond*, where he worked on hydrographic surveys, beginning a long career of surveying for seaplane routes and seadromes, both for the Navy and for civilian organizations,

While attached to a patrol squadron in the Pacific area, he was ordered in 1942 to the Naval Air Station, Norfolk, Virginia, to aid in the commissioning of the seaplane division of Air Transport Squadron ONE. This was the first unit of the Naval Air Transport Service later known as the Fleet Logistic Air Wing.

By now Byrne had established such an excellent reputation of his flying ability that he was selected in 1942 to make the test, flights of the soon to become famous Martin "Mars" flying boat.

In 1943 he flew survey flights over the Atlantic and Mediterranean for the purpose of establishing seaplane routes and bases. The following year he was instrumental in the establishment of a largo ferry wing at Floyd Bennett Field.

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The wing, which ferried aircraft all over the world, in one month transferred 5,257 aircraft, an amazing record.

From 1948-49 Bryne ferried seaplanes from the east coast to Seattle, Washington. This was a highly dangerous task for after leaving Corpus Christi, Texas, there were only four bodies of water large enough to permit emergency landings. In 1950, he flew survey flights over the Mediterranean for the purpose of establishing seaplane bases and anchorages to provide logistical support to the Mediterranean fleet.

Byrne fondly recalls the early years of flying. As one of the pioneers he first flew in planes which had nothing like the maze of complicated gauges and dials that confront the aviator of today. In those days there was merely an oil pressure gauge, He used a string tied to the bow of the plane to tell whether the plane was slipping, skidding or flying straight ahead. He judged his airspeed by the singing of the plane's wires. Instead of a radio, telegrams were used to notify an airfield impending arrival of an "aeroplane". In place of radio beacons at night and overcast days, pilots used their noses.

Byrne remembers more than once flying down the east coast at about 200 feet knowing only by the smell of coffee that he was over Brooklyn, and only by the odor of fish packing plants that he was over the Delaware Coast. The fumes of sulphuric acid from paper mills were a welcome sign for they signified the end of the flight at Charleston, South Carolina.

A cheerful Irishman with snowy windblown hair, Byrne at 62 showed no signs of slowing down. He loved the outdoors and preferred to walk the mile or so from his quarters to the Operations Building. When Chief Boatswain Byrne, who calls everyone from admiral on down "mate", reported to NAS Lakehurst in 1954, it was the first time in 26 years that he bad been assigned shore duty.