



Harold L. Buell, Commander, USN (Ret.)
 "Hal"

Date of Designation: 1 October 1941 NA # 9095

Dates of Active Duty: December 1940 - January 1962

Total Flight Hours: 4,350

Carrier/Ship Landings: Fixed wing: 415

Approximate Flight Hours:

Jet: 600 Prop: 3,750 VF/VA: 1,820

VS (VX-1): 600

Combat Tours:

WW II: (Apr. 1942-Oct. 1942) VS-5 (SBD), *Yorktown*, *Saratoga*, and *Enterprise*, in battles of Coral Sea, Midway and Guadalcanal Landings, Guadalcanal Defense, Eastern Solomons.

WW II: (Oct. 1942-May 1943) VB-10 (SBD), USS *Enterprise*, in the battles of Santa Cruz, Battle of Guadalcanal (November 1942), and Rennell Island.

WW II: (Mar. 1944-Nov. 1944) VB-2 (SB2C), USS *Hornet* (New), in battles of Palau, Woleai, Yap, Hollandia Occupation, Truk, Marianas Occupation, first Philippine Sea, Bonin Islands, Palau Occupation, first Philippine Island raids.
 Estimated total combat missions: 125+.

Aviation Commands:

CO, VF-921 and CO, VF-84 (Jun. 1952-Oct. 1953)

Combat Awards:

Among 23 combat awards, holds the Navy Cross, two Purple Hearts and four Presidential Unit Citations.



Duty Assignment Chronology

- 12/40-11/41 Aviation Cadet Flight Training (USNR Aviation Base, Robertson, MO; NAS Pensacola and NAS Miami, FL)
- 11/41-3/42 ACTG, NAS Norfolk, VA.
- 3/42-4/42 TAD VB-3 and VS-6, NAS Kaneohe Bay, Oahu, TH.
- 4/42-10/42 VS-5, USS *Yorktown*, *Saratoga*, *Enterprise* and on Guadalcanal.
- 10/42-5/43 VB-10, USS *Enterprise*.
- 5/43-11/44 VB-2, Wildwood, NJ, Quonset Point, RI., and Santa Rosa, CA, USS *Hornet* (New).
- 11/44-6/45 Instructor, CNAATRA, NAAS Cecil Field, FL.
- 6/45-11/45 VFB-1, NAS Daytona Beach, FL.
- 11/45-3/46 Leave (Ottumwa, IA).
- 3/46-6/47 Directorate of Intelligence, OP-23 (Joint Air Force/Navy), Pentagon, Washington, D.C.
- 6/47-6/48 Student, General Line School, Newport, RI.
- 6/48-8/50 Projects Test Pilot, Air Development Squadron ONE (VX-1), Key West, FL., USS *Sicily*, and USS *Wright*.
- 8/50-12/50 Student, Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, VA.
- 12/50-6/52 CNO, OP-32, Pentagon, Washington, D.C.
- 6/52-10/53 CO, VF-921 and VF-84; Acting CAG; NAS Oceana, VA, USS *Antietam*, *Tarawa*, *Bennington* and *Coral Sea*.
- 10/53-11/54 Air Officer, USS *Saipan* (Korea and Around-the-World Cruises).
- 11/54-4/57 CNAVANTRA Staff, NAS Corpus Christi, TX.
- 4/57-6/59 Project Officer, COMOPDEVFOR Staff, Norfolk, VA., and USS *Saratoga*.
- 6/59-6/60 Director of Training, XO, NAAS Whiting Field, FL.
- 6/60-1/62 Personal Officer, CNABATRA Staff, NAS Pensacola, FL
- 1/62 Retired from active duty.

Summary of Significant Career Events

- (1) During 1942 through 1944, in the Pacific war with Japan, completed war cruises with three dive bombing squadrons, VS-5, VB-10 and VB-2, flying from the carriers *Yorktown*, *Saratoga*, *Enterprise* and *Hornet* (new). Estimated combat missions: 125+.
- (2) Flew missions as a wingman, section, division and strike-flight leader during three combat cruises. Developed dive bombing tactics that were successful in destroying enemy ships with low aircraft losses.
- (3) As a member of Flight 300 from USS *Enterprise* on 24 August 1942, was sent to Guadalcanal; flew more than 20 missions with the Cactus Air Force during August and September 1942.
- (4) Led SB2C dive bombers of VB-2 from USS *Hornet* in attack on Japanese carrier *Zuikaku* (20 June 1944 Turkey Shoot) in which she was heavily damaged with eight hits and numerous near misses; this enemy carrier never flew another combat aircraft from her deck after this attack. Mission was sent beyond gas range -- one-half of all aircraft were lost in night water landings.
- (5) Have been told by eminent historians that, apparently, is the only carrier pilot, Japanese or American, that was present at all five carrier-versus-carrier sea battles--Coral Sea, Midway, Eastern Solomons, Santa Cruz and First Philippine Sea--and survived the experience.
- (6) As a test pilot and Project Officer at VX-1, from July 1948, through August 1950, flight tested AD, AF and TBM hunter-killer prototypes, flying six hundred hours in all conditions while developing all-weather, 24-hour-a-day antisubmarine warfare tactics, including CVL operations.
- (7) As Commanding Officer, VF-84, flying F9F-5 Jets, led squadron in all test cruises of evaluation of the first angled deck built on USS *Antietam* (1/53 through 7/53). VF-84 made about one-half of the 4,200 test landings, under all operating conditions, without an accident.
- (8) As Air Officer, USS *Saipan*, 10/53 through 10/54, completed Korean War tour and around-the-world cruise with VMA-324 Marine AD squadron on board and set an operational record for carrier-based Marine squadrons, without a single deck crash, during the period.
- (9) As Project Officer, OPDEVFOR (with VX-3), 6/57 through 6/59, worked on first air-to-air missile SPARROW; first heat-seeking missile ZUNI; first air-to-ground missile BULLPUP; and first space suit Goodrich MK-4; also headed F4D aircraft acceptance project.