



Jim with VF-17 on USS *Hornet* (Flush with 2 victories) 1944

**James L. Pearce, Lieutenant, USN**  
 “Jim”

Date of Designation: August 1942

Dates of Active Duty: 1 July 1941 - 28 August 1948

Total Flight Hours: 8,000

Carrier/Ship Landings: Fixed wing: 215

Approximate Flight Hours:

Jet: 5,000 Prop: 3,000 VF/VA: 4,000

VR/VP: 500 VS: 400 VT: 50

Other: Homebuilt experimental - 125 hours

Combat Tours:

WW II: VS-52 Based on Bora Bora in the Society Islands, 12/42-7/43. Flying OS2U's on floats.

WW II: VF-18 USS *Bunker Hill*, 8/43-3/44. Flying F6F-3's.

WW II: VF-17 USS *Hornet*, 4/44-7/45. Flying F6F-5's.

Combat Awards:

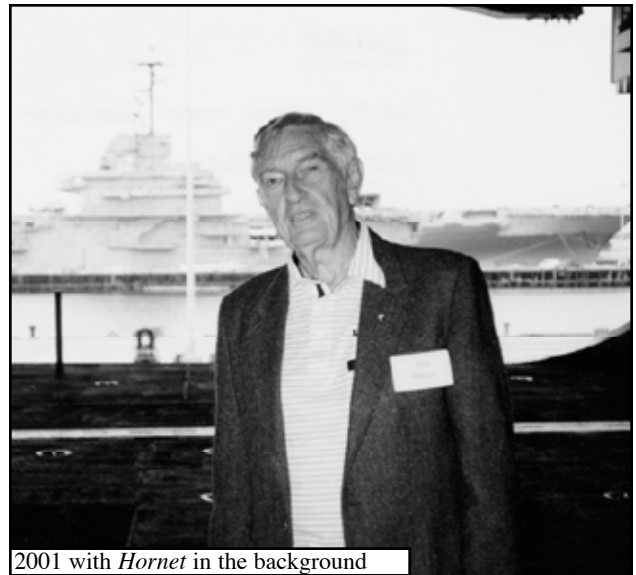
Distinguished Flying Cross with two Gold stars

Air Medal with five Gold stars.

2 Presidential Unit Citations

**Duty Assignment Chronology**

- 7/41-8/42 Flight Training, Kansas City and Corpus Christi.
- 9/42-7/43 VS 52 Bora Bora, Society Islands.
- 8/43-3/44 VF-18, USS *Bunker Hill*.
- 4/44-7/45 VF-17, USS *Hornet*.
- 8/45-12/45 XVF-200, NAS Brunswick, ME and NAF Fentress, VA.
- 1/46-6/46 O&R, Corpus Christi, TX.
- 7/46-8/48 NATC, Flight Test Division, Carrier Branch, Patuxent River, MD.
- 8/48-2/49 Resigned commission to work for Grumman as an Engineering Test Pilot.



2001 with *Hornet* in the background

- 3/49-8/51 North American Aviation, Los Angeles Division. Engineering Test Pilot.
- 8/51-1/62 North American Aviation, Columbus Division, Chief Engineering Test Pilot and Manager of Engineering Flight Test.
- 1/62-3/66 North American Aviation, Space & Information Systems Division, Downey, CA. Director, Apollo Test and Operations
- 3/66-8/67 North American/Rockwell, Kennedy Space Center, FL. Director, Apollo Command and Service Module Test Operations.
- 8/67-11/67 Rockwell Corp., Downey, CA. Assistant Program Manager, Apollo Program.
- 11/67-8/75 J.L.Pearce & Associates, Inc., Cocoa Beach, FL. Aerospace Consultants
- 6/72-8/75 Flight Systems, Inc. Newport Beach & Mojave, CA. Director, Aircraft Programs
- 11/67-12/96 American Marine, Inc., Cocoa, FL. Chief Executive Officer.
- 1/97-4/02 Pearce Properties, Inc., Alajuela, Costa Rica. Chief Executive Officer.

**Summary of Significant Career Events**

- (1) March 1945 - Forced to join a very exclusive club consisting of Naval Aviators who have been catapulted off the athwartship hangar deck catapult while underway and launching aircraft from the flight deck (pre-dawn and scary!)
- (2) 1946 - Graduation in Class 0, Test Pilot's School at Flight Test, NATC, Pax River.
- (3) 1955 - Joined the American Fighter Aces Association.
- (4) 1956 - Joined the Society of Experimental Test Pilots.
- (5) 1958 - Awarded a Fellowship in the Society of Experimental Test Pilots.
- (6) 1964 - Awarded an Associate Fellowship in the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics
- (7) 1965 - President, Society of Experimental Test Pilots

- Continued -

- (8) 1966 - Awarded the first SETP James H. Doolittle Award for management accomplishments by a test pilot.



Receiving original J. H. Doolittle award from Jimmy Doolittle

#### Summary of Significant Career Events continued

##### General

- Performed contractor first flights on 10 each North American and 1 each Grumman aircraft models during a 15 year testing career
- Log books show flights in 89 different aircraft
- Built and am currently flying a Velocity experimental aircraft.
- Probably am one of very few one legged Mach 2 Naval Aviators (lost my left leg below the knee in 1953).



Jim Pearce and Jaquiline Cochran after her first trip to Mach 2