



Robert H. Belter, Captain USN (Ret.)
"Bob"

Date of Designation: 25 January 1950

Dates of Active Duty: June 1948 - August 1975

Total Flight Hours: 5,653

Carrier/Ship Landings: Fixed wing: 210

Approximate Flight Hours:

Jet: 1,770 Prop: 3,883 VF/VA: 2,240 VR/VP: 1,150
VT: 2,263 Helo: 35 Other: Civil 200

Combat Tours:

Vietnam: Air Wing-19, Aug.-Oct. 1964, USS *Bon Homme Richard*. 12 Recce, combat support missions).

Vietnam: Air Wing-7, Jul.-Aug. 1965, USS *Independence* 52 combat missions.

Total: 64 combat missions

Aviation Commands:

OinC VAH-4 Det E, Feb.-Dec. 1963 (WestPac, Vietnam)

OinC VAH-4 Det E, Feb.-Aug. 1965 (Lant. WestPac, Vietnam) Turn Around Tour

Combat and Other Awards:

Air Medal (2 Stars)

2 Presidential Meritorious Service Medals

Navy Commendation Medal with bronze star and combat "V"

Duty Assignment Chronology

Pre-1948 Soloed at age 16. "Polish Altar" of model aircraft trophies including National Record for Class D free flight with model of own design. As a Flying Midshipman candidate in college, flew own 1931 Travel Air Jr. to NAS Minneapolis to fly in SB2C with WWII naval aviation brother.

6/48-1/50 Selected "Outstanding Midshipman" Pre-flight Class 15-48. Took review with Asst. SecNav.



- 4/50-3/53 VP-5, Designated P2V 1st Pilot as an Ensign, and Plane Commander as a LTJG.
- 3/53-2/55 Pensacola, Primary Instructor. Selected for Instructors' Basic Training Unit as staff instructor. Investigated, demonstrated 100+ inverted spins in SNJ. Design, built and patented winning design for T-28 front seat instrument hood, used until the T-28 went out of business.
- 2/55-6/55 Decided "at sea" carrier Navy was the way to go. Managed orders to VC-6.
- 7/55-12/57 VC-6 AJ-2 "Savage" aka "Flying Caliope", cruises in *Bennington* and *Kearsarge*. Selected to fly mission profile with REAL MK15 Five Meg (10,000 lbs) thermo nuclear weapon, including wing check, proof of loading (as far as known, the first and only NavAv to do so.) Designed safety fix for AJ-2 escape hatch, replacing design which would prevent crew ejection. Only superb airmanship saved the same AJ-2 twice (AJ-2 Incidents covered in Significant Career Events text.
- 1/58-6/59 HatuPac/VAH-123. RAG Special Missions Officer, flight instructor in A-3, F-3D, F9F, P2V-3C. One of first A-3 RAG instructors.
- 7/59-6/63 PG School for BS degree. Also obtained MS Aero in two years.
- 7/63-9/65 A-3 RAG then OinC VAH-4 Dets with Air Wing 19, USS *Bon Homme Richard* and Air Wing 7/ *Independence*. Air Wing 19, Indian Ocean and then Vietnam. A-3 Det remained Cubi and *Kitty Hawk* due SIOP, rejoined after I.O. Flew recce and combat support missions Vietnam. Air Wing flew cover for McNamara's first visit to Vietnam.
- 1/66-6/68 Attack Branch Head, Weapons System Test, NATC Patuxent River, MD. Selected to fly F-111A/B Glide Slope Evaluation (final nail in F-111). BIS trails, other test/eval F-8/A-3/A-4/A-6/A-7/OV-10/OV-1/Otter/C-131.

Duty Assignment Chronology continued

- Did development and test of A-6E track-while-scan radar and new computer.
- 7/68-6/70 A-6E Design, Class Desk at NAVAIRSYSCOM. Took Pax River test experience to A-6E Class Desk, brought A-6E to the fleet with greatly enhanced combat capability. Flew A-6E regularly at Pax River to check progress of air tasks associated with combat capability improvements.
- 7/70-6/71 CFT-77 Staff (VADMs Bardshar and Cooper), AOCS Material, Vietnam. Kept current in A-6, A-7 and F-4.
- 7/71-7/74 NAVPRO, Bethpage, NY (A-6E). Flew A-6E regularly, last Navy flight being with George Skurla, President of Grumman. Second MSM award for exceptional administration of NASA Lunar Explorer Module contracts and unprecedented \$500 million reduction in order negotiation backlog.
- 7/774-8/75 F-14 Deputy Program Manager, NAVAIR. Lead team to Iran for F-14 TOMCAT support and introduction. Lead team to USS *Enterprise* (Indian Ocean) to analyze the TF-30 engine failures that caused loss of two TOMCATS on first cruise.

Post-retirement: Continuing active support and all things that fly:

- Commanding Officer ANA Squadron, Monterey, CA for six years.
- Active member and regular attendee Tailhook, Quiet Birdmen (same squadron as Jimmy Doolittle and Butch Voris), Flying Midshipman Association.
- Attended Oshkosh EAA.
- Airport Land Use Commissioner, Monterey County for eleven years (no pay).
- Designed/prototyped hyperbaric oxygen chamber.
- Designed new method for measuring spray drift for duster aircraft.
- Designed and built home with guest house- hands on.
- Re-skinned, re-engined and converted ex-Trailways bus into RV, including A-6 type stick controller for ten speed transmission, cruise control, brakes.

Summary of Significant Career Events

- (1) Have flown/tested the following aircraft:
NAVY: AJ-2, A-3, A-4, A-6, A-7, F3D-2, F-4J, F6F-5, F8E/J, F9F-8, F-111A/B, C131, E-2C, NU-18 (Otter), OV-1, OV-10, P2V, SNB, SNJ, T-2V, T-2J, T-28.
CIVIL: Aeronca, Cessna, Ercoupe, Interstate, Piper, Taylorcraft, Travel Air Jr Model 12W (1931).

- (2) Interesting incidents in AJ-2 (Both in the same aircraft)

Incident #1 - USS *Bennington*. Broken wire on trap, went off the angled deck barely flying. Witnesses said tailhook made a rooster tail in the water. Recovered safely.

Incident #2 - Out of Hong Kong on *Bennington*, launched with 4,000 lb bomb shape. Cat shot dislodged the shape which went through the aft bulkhead, tearing the jet engine off its mounts with an accompanying fire (not sustained due to kinked main fuel hose). Opening bomb bay to release shape cause the fins to rip out a control cable cluster on the way out. Lost flight control boost. Controls loose but aircraft was flyable with brute strength. After discussion with the Air Boss, binged to Okinawa - good decision because jet engine was free and loose and would have come through the cockpit on a trap. NOTE: The cause of the shape being dislodged was determined to be the result of an AirPac aircraft bulletin which called for the removal of a rivet head which impinged upon the single shackle bomb suspension/release follow up system.