



David V. Denton, Colonel, USMC (Ret.)
"Hook"

Date of Designation: 5 April 1961 NA#V-17577

Dates of Active Duty: 17 January 1957 - 1 August 1987

Total Flight Hours: 5,362

Carrier/Ship Landings: Fixed wing: 446

Approximate Flight Hours:

Jet: 5,201 Prop: 161

Combat Tours:

Vietnam: MAG-11, 06/65–09/65, Danang

Vietnam: VMFA-323, 10/68–08/69, Chu Lai, (F-4B)

 VMFA-334, Chu Lai, (F-4J)

Total Combat Missions: 154, (F-4)

Aviation Commands:

CO, VMFA-323, 08/78–08/80 MCAS ElToro, USS *Coral Sea* (F-4)

CO, MATSG , 12/81–05/84 NAS Lemoore (FA-18)

CO, MCCRTG-10, 06/84–06/86 MCAS Yuma (F-4, A-4, AV-8)

Combat Awards:

Distinguished Flying Cross

Air Medal with Strike/Flight Numeral 11 and Gold Star

Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V"

Summary of Significant Career Events

David Denton enlisted in the Marine Corps in January 1957. As a Sergeant, he was accepted into the Marine Aviation Cadet Program in 1960 and was commissioned upon completion of flight training in April 1961. He was subsequently stationed at MCAS Beaufort, SC and assigned to VMF-333 and VMF-251. Flying F8s during this tour of duty, he made a Med cruise with CVG-10 aboard the USS *Shangri-La* and participated in the Cuban Crisis by manning the hot pad at NAS Key West.



His next duty assignment was with MAG-11 Headquarters Staff at Atsugi, Japan in October 1964, where he flew F-9s and VMF-122's F8s until Mag-11 deployed to Danang Air Base, South Vietnam in June 1965. Headquarters Marine Corps denied his request for extension of his overseas tour in Vietnam and he was ordered to VT-25 at NAS Chase Field, TX in September 1965, to serve as an instructor pilot in the advanced flight training command. It was during this tour of duty the most significant event of his life occurred when he met and married the beautiful Anna Maria de la Garza of San Antonio, Texas.

In June 1968, the then Captain Denton was advised via telephone call from Headquarters Marine Corps that he would be ordered to report to MAG-13 at MCAS Chu Lai, South Vietnam in September. He was advised that since there would be no F8s there, HQMC would order him to transition training if he could find an available training billet. He found an opening at VMFAT-201 at MCAS Cheery Point, NC and with VMFA-415 at MCAS Beaufort, transitioned in to the F-4 during the months of July and August, and flew his first combat mission with VMFA-323 on October 7, 1968.

As a Major he was ordered to re-join VMFA-323 at MCAS El Toro, CA as Operations Officer in June 1970. During this tour, several significant events occurred. Most significant was Anna Maria's giving birth to his wonderful son, David Eric. Of comparatively lesser significance were his development, publishing, and the general acceptance of his "Split Plane Maneuvering" concept and his "Hook VID" tactic.

His next assignment was as Operations Officer of VMFA-531 in March 1972, in preparation for the squadron's Med cruise deployment aboard the USS *Forrestal*. Upon completion of the carrier deployment in July 1973, he attended Command and Staff College at Marine Corps Base Quantico, VA.

In July 1974, he reported for duty as the Executive

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Officer of the Marine Air Reserve Training Detachment at Andrews A.F.B. to assist the Marine reserve squadron VMF-321 in their transition from the F-8 to the F-4 aircraft.

In August 1976, he regretfully refused the opportunity to join the anticipated Marine F-14 training detachment at Naval Air Station Miramar, CA in favor of attending the College Degree Completion Program at the Auburn University, Alabama. After graduation with a Bachelor of Science degree in Aviation Management, in August 1978 he reported for duty as Commanding Officer of VMFA-323 at MCAS El Toro, CA.

In July 1979 he took his squadron aboard the USS *Coral Sea* for an eleven month WestPac cruise, the apex and nadir of which was the Iranian US hostage extraction attempt which was aborted as his division manned their aircraft for launch to suppress air opposition from Bandar-a Abbas.

He then served as the Executive Officer of MAG-11 at MCAS El Toro until September 1981, when he began to develop plans to stand up a Marine Aviation Training Support Group at NAS Lemoore, CA in preparation for the coming of the FA-18 aircraft. He designed the mission statement, table of organization, equipment and coordinated facility requirements with the Naval Air Station. Upon completion of preparations, in November 1981 he was assigned as the Commanding Officer, MATSG Lemoore and served as an augment FA-18 flight instructor for VFA-125.

In June 1984, he assumed command of Marine Combat Crew Readiness Training Group-10 at MCAS Yuma, AZ and got to fly the groups F-4's and A-4's and got checked out in the AV-8. In June 1986. he was reassigned as the Chief of Staff of the Third Marine Aircraft Wing at MCAS El Toro, CA where he flew FA 18's and RF-4's until his retirement in August 1987.