



**James H. Ruliffson, CAPT, USN (Ret.)**  
 “Ruff”

Hometown: Storm Lake, Iowa

High School and College Career:

Storm Lake High School; grad 1958

College: Iowa State University; grad 1962

Dates on Active Duty: Nov 21 1962 – Dec 1 1986

Date Commissioned/Source:

USN Nov 21, 1962 NROTC

Date of Designation: March 31, 1966

Total Flight Hours: VF all the way; Approx 3600; Flight time in F-4B, F-4J; Adversary TA-4J, A-4E, T-38, F-5E; flew 32 different aircraft, from the C-5 to glider.

Carrier/Ship Landings: 699

Combat tours:

VF-21 Sept 66 – Mar 67

VF-21 Nov 67 – June 68

VF-111 Sept 71 – June 72.

Notably outside the bookends of Pres. Johnson’s Bombing Pause.

Total Combat missions:

247; all in F-4B aircraft

Commands:

CO: NFWS (Topgun)

CO: VF-21

Awards:

Legion of Merit

19 Air medals

3 Navy Commendation Medals with Combat V



### **Duty Assignment Chronology**

12/62-09/64	USS <i>Black</i> DD-666
10/64-03/66	Navy Flight Training
04/66-09/66	VF-121 (F-4 RAG student)
09/66-06/68	VF-21
06/68-12/70	VF-121 (instructor duty) ; concurrently NFWS (Topgun} original cadre Oct 68 – Dec 70.
01/71-04/73	VF-111
05/73-06/74	NTPS student
06/74-03/75	Pax River Service Test
04/75-12/76	CO: NFWS (Topgun)
12/76-10/77	XO: VF-191
11/77-11/79	VF-21 (XO-CO)
12/79-12/80	Naval War College
12/80-11/83	OP-955
11/83-12/86	NAVAIR (PMA-241)
12/86	Retired from Active Duty

### **Summary of Significant Career Events**

- (1) Reported to VF-21 on Yankee Station 3 days after my day/night quals at VF-121. Lost a VF-21 crew to combat that night. Never lost another crew to combat or operational accident throughout my fleet squadron career. Learned F-4 ACM tactics from a master – LCDR Duke Hernandez.
- (2) Selected as Topgun original instructor cadre. Taught AIM-7 and AIM-9 combat employment. ACM flights daily for both Topgun and VF-121 RAG students. Almost got dinged flight pay for limited night/IFR flight hours.
- (3) POW Escort Officer for a good friend; experiencing wonderful warm “welcome home” from American populace.

(4) Selected as Topgun CO after 8 months at Naval Test Center; Only pilot to have 2 tours at Topgun and never graduated. Initiated Adversary Pilot Training and F-14 War-at-Sea Tactics Training – Both syllabi are alive and well at Topgun today.

(5) Was high-time F-4 pilot in two “F-8 to F-4” transition squadrons, both immediately after Topgun tours. Flew F-4Bs almost throughout career; didn’t get into F-4Js until VF-21 XO/CO tour in 1978-79. Tired F-4Bs in VF-111 and VF-191. Was on the “Night Team” throughout flying career.

(6) Have one less landing than takeoff...ejected from F-4 rear seat in VF-121 during tactics instructional flight. Helo rescue from among multiple Great Whites surrounding crash debris.

(7) Graduated Naval War College with “Highest Distinction”. Won Middendorf Award for Best Research Paper.

(8) 3 Years at PMA-241 as Principal Deputy for F-14A+ (F-110 engines only) and F-14D Development; both fielded successfully with new capabilities.

### **Summary of Post Military Work**

(1) 16 years a co-founding partner of WBB, Inc., an industry-supporting consulting firm, specializing in weapons systems procurement and maximizing systems capabilities. Three of us in 1986; 96 personnel as of retirement in 2002; over 1000 personnel as of 2021. Several big wins (and many smaller) include 1. personally showing Lockheed how to successfully integrate LANTIRN on the F-14 series without having to integrate it into the complex Hughes 1-of-a-kind F-14 system software. The F-14 was retired at the top of its game due to LANTIRN. 2. stressing warfighting capability of the Hughes AIM-9X in the winning design.

### **Personal**

(1) Married to the same wonderful woman, Sharon, 60 years as of November 2022.

(2) Two children, Lisa and Craig (deceased); four grandchildren, and one great-grandson.

### **Associations/Membership/Boards:**

(1) Golden Eagles

(2) Tailhook Association

(3) TOPGUN Association

(4) Deplorable Geezers Luncheon Group (elegibility: earned Navy gold wings)