



William F. Span , Captain USN (Ret.)
 “Bill”

Date of Designation: 1 October 1951 NA: #T 1741

Dates of Active Duty: March 1950 - May 1977

Total Flight Hours: 5,125

Carrier/Ship Landings: Fixed wing: 1,020

Approximate Flight Hours:

Jet: 4,025 Prop: 1,100 VA: 3,000 Other: 1,125

Combat Tours:

Vietnam: USS *Independence*, Strike Operations Officer,
 Aug. 1965 - Dec. 1965
 USS *Oriskany*, VA-164, Jul. 1967 - Feb. 1968,
 XO
 USS *Hancock*, VA-164, Jul. 1968 - Feb. 1969,
 CO

Total Combat Missions: 279- (A-4 Skyhawk)

Aviation Commands:

CO, VA-164, Jul. 1968 - 1969 (A-4 Skyhawk)

Combat Awards:

2 Silver Stars
 5 Distinguished Flying Crosses
 1 Bronze Star
 31 Air Medals (5 Individual & 26 Strike Flight)
 2 U. S. Navy commendation Medals
 1 Vietnam Cross of Gallantry
 9 Other Awards and Decorations

Duty Assignment Chronology

3/50-12/51 Flight Training NAS Pensacola/Corpus Christi
 (SNJ, F6F).
 1/52-2/52 Jet Transition Training, NAS Kingsville, TX.
 (TO-1).



2/52-2/55 VX-2 Experimental Squadron, Chincoteague,
 VA (F6F, F8F, TV-2D, TD-2C, JD-1, PB4Y-
 2K, SNB, R4D-8).
 2/55-2/58 Naval Staff Duty, Springfield, MA (T-33,
 C-45G).
 2/58-11/59 U. S. Naval Post-graduate School, Monterey,
 CA (JRB-6).
 11/59-12/60 Commander Naval Forces Korea, Aide & Flag
 Lieutenant (T-33, F-100, L-20, L-23D).
 1960-1961 Guided Missile Unit- Brown Field, CA.
 OinC. (FJ-3, F9F-8T, JD-1T).
 1961-1963 VA-146, NAS Miramar, CA (A-4).
 1963-1965 NROTC, Ohio State University, Columbus,
 OH (T2V-1, T-1A, T-34).
 1965-1966 USS *Independence*, Strike Operations Officer-
 Vietnam (C-1A, T-33B).
 1966-1967 XO, VA-164, USS *Oriskany* Vietnam (A-4).
 1967-1968 CO, VA-164, USS *Hancock* Vietnam (A-4).
 1969-1970 U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI (T-1A).
 1970-1973 NATO Staff SACLANT, Norfolk, VA.
 Exercise Planner COG Officer “Strong
 Express 72” (TA-4F, T-1A, EA-4).
 1973-1977 Atlantic Fleet Airborne Command Post-Battle
 Staff CDR.
 1977 Retired as Captain-USN (MIG-29)

Summary of Significant Career Events

- (1) Sept. 1950. Selected as outstanding student Pre-Flight Class 10-50.
- (2) July 1951. Set Student Flight Record of 80 hours in one month, flying F6F "Hellcat".
- (3) July 1953. Flying a F8F "Bearcat" shot down an out of control F6F-5K Hellcat drone over Atlantic Ocean.
- (4) Sept.-Dec. 1965. USS *Independence* Strike Operations Officer, planned air strikes over Vietnam.

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Summary of Significant Career Events continued

- (5) July 1966- Jan. 1968. XO, VA-164, USS *Oriskany*, Air Wing 16. Was Alpha Strike Leader of strikes over Ninh Binh, Cao Tral, Bac Giang, Tien Nong, Phu Ly, Thai Binh, Haiphong, Thank Hoa, Kien An airfield. Conducted Iron Hand over Phuc Yen, Hanoi, Hanoi RR Yard, Haiphong, Hai Duong, Phu Ly and Vinh. Armed Recce over North Vietnam. Destroyed three MIG-21's at Phuc Yen Airfield on 25 October 1967. Destroyed three active Sam Sites over North Vietnam. Flew 122 Combat Missions during this period.



- (6) Aug. 1968 - Feb. 1969, USS *Hancock* Air Wing 16, VA-164 CO.
- (7) 1 October 1968. Destroyed active Sam Site South of Vinh Son. Flew 156 combat missions during this period for a total of 279 missions, North Vietnam.
- (8) 1970-1972 SAACLANT, Norfolk, VA as COG Officer- Planned world's largest NATO Land/Naval Live Exercise "Strong Express" three years in planning, took place in 1972.
- (9) May 1977. Retired from active duty.
- (10) May 1999. One of a very few western aviators to fly a Russian MIG-29 from the front seat at Zhukovsky Air Field, Moscow. Performed the Tail Slide, Cobra, and other exotic maneuvers. It is amazing what \$15,000 will buy in Russia, also had a full time armed guard for \$10 who guided me on a tour of the restricted Zukovsky test facility flight line when at first it was not allowed.