



Donald D. Engen, Vice Admiral, USN (Ret.)
 "Don"

Date of Designation: 9 June 1943 NA # C-3850

Dates of Active Duty: 9 June 1942 - 30 September 1978

Total Flight Hours: 7,450

Carrier/Ship Landings: Fixed wing: 624

Approximate Flight Hours:

Jet: 4,500 Prop: 2,700 Helo: 50 VF/VA: 5,500
 Glider: 200 hours

Combat Tours:

WW II: VB-19, USS *Lexington*, Jun. 1944-Nov. 1944. Guam, Palau, Philippines, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, Formosa, Battle for Leyte Gulf. Sank many merchant ships, Zuikaku (CV), Nachi (CA).
 - 50 combat missions.

Korea: VF-51, USS *Valley Forge* (CV-45), Jul. 1950-Dec. 1950. First deployed jets in Pacific. Was on first offensive strike of the war into North Korea, then throughout Korea from Sinanju to Pusan and back. - 43 combat missions.

Vietnam: CO, USS *Mount Katmai*. Apr.-Jun. 1965. Pushed bombs, it felt like combat.

Aviation Commands:

CO, VF 21, Mar. 1960 - Nov. 1961. Flew F3H-2M
 COMCVG 11 Jan. 1962 - Dec. 1962. Flew F8U, A4D, F4H.
 CO, USS *America* (CVA-66), Jun. 1966 - Jul. 1967. Flew anything I could get.
 COMCARDIV 4, Sep. 1971 - May 1973. Flew my own airplane - a Bonanza.

Combat Awards:

Navy Cross (WW II)
 Distinguished Flying Cross (WW II)
 3 Air Medals (1 in WW II, 2 in Korea)



Duty Assignment Chronology

- 9/42-6/43 Flight Training (St. Marys, Los Alamitos and Corpus Christi).
- 6/43-8/43 Operational training. (Daytona Beach, FL).
- 8/43 Carrier Quals in USS *Sable*, (Lake Michigan).
- 8/43-12/44 VSB and then VB-19 (Los Alamitos, Kahului, and USS *Lexington*).
- 1/45-12/45 VF then VBF-19 (Santa Rosa, Kahului, Barbers Point and USS *Hornet*).
- 1/45-7/45 Inactive Duty (flying at Los Alamitos in Reserves).
- 8/45-5/47 Project Pilot for guided missiles (NAS Mojave, NAMTC Pt. Mugu, CA).
- 6/47-9/48 UCLA (Holloway 5 term program).
- 10/48 FAETUPAC (Schools).
- 11/48-2/49 VF-212 Operations Officer (NAS Sand Point, WA).
- 3/49-12/50 VF-52 for 1 month then VF-51, Flight Officer. (San Diego, USS *Valley Forge*-WestPac).
- 1/51-12/51 General Line School (Monterey, CA).
- 1/52-12/52 Empire Test Pilots School, (Farnborough, Hants, England).
- 1/53-6/55 VX 3, Project pilot (NAS Atlantic City, NJ).
- 7/55-6/57 VF 21, Executive Officer (NAS Oceana, USS *Bennington*-WestPac).
- 6/57-9/59 NATC Flight Test Division, Project Officer - Flying Qualities, then Head - Flying Qualities Branch (Patuxent River, MD).
- 10/59-3/60 RAG Training VF-121 (NAS Miramar, CA).
- 3/60-10/61 CO, VF-21 (NAS Alameda, CA., USS *Midway*-WestPac).
- 11/61-1/62 RAG Training VF-124, VA-125 (NAS Miramar and NAS Lemoore, CA).
- 1/62-12/62 CAG 11 (NAS Miramar, NAS Lemoore, and USS *Kitty Hawk*-WestPac).
- 1/63-12/63 USS *Coral Sea*, Operations Officer (NAS Alameda - WestPac).
- 1/64-7/65 CO, USS *Mount Karmai* (Concord, CA. and WestPac).

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- 8/65-6/66 Naval War College, Student (Newport, RI).
 - 6/66-7/67 CO, USS *America* (Norfolk, VA, Lant &Med).
 - 8/67-9/68 Student, George Washington University.
 - 9/68-8/71 OPNAV, OP-508 (Aviation Plans), OP-60B and OP-60 (Strategic Plans and Policies).
 - 9/71-5/73 Commander Carrier Division Four (Norfolk, cruises to Caribbean, North Atlantic and Med).
 - 6/73-9/76 Deputy CINCUSNAVEUR (London, England)
 - 10/76-11/76 OPNAV, OP-06B (Plans and Policies).
 - 12/76-9/78 Deputy and Chief of Staff, CINCLANT and U. S. Atlantic Fleet (Norfolk, VA).
- (9) Participated in trials and development of TACAN, Sidewinder, low level Nav, many others, and fleet intro for FJ3, F9F-7/8, F7U-3.
 - (10) Was not too smart and shut down FJ3 engine at 54,000 feet. Lost all pressurization.
 - (11) Projects at Flight Test at Patuxent: Spins in F11F-1, F9F-8, FJ-3, 4, 4B, F8U-1, 2, 2N, F4D, A4D-1, -2N and T2V; Flying Qualities in A3J, F4H, F8U-3, FJ4F (with XLR-1 rocket), A3D-2Q, others; Determine new rate of roll requirements, flew many Navy and Air Force airplanes; Performance determination projects in different airplanes; etc.

Summary of Significant Career Events

- (1) Flew SBD, SB2C3, F4U, F8F in WW II
- (2) Pioneered jet instrument procedures. Made first low visibility landings in jet, 0-25 foot ceiling and 1/16 mile forward visibility, 1949, Arcata CA., F9F-3.
- (3) Developed 1st jet cruise control computer. 1949- 50.
- (4) First Navy jet flying in combat, Korea 1950, F9F-3.
- (5) Have made 7 wheels up landings in flying career -six on purpose on flex deck in Sea Vampire at Farnborough in 1953.
- (6) Made first mirror landings in Sea Vampire in HMS *Illustrious* in Dec 1953 and recommended USN buy mirror. They did in 1954, with first USN landings in 1955.
- (7) Tried to cross English Channel in a glider, but fortunately turned back.
- (8) Created project and developed Fleet In-Flight-Refueling at VX-3, in 1954 flying F9F-7/8, FJ-3, F2H-3/4,F7U-3. In Oct 1955, OPNAV decreed that all VF would have air refueling capability in future.
- (12) Attempted World altitude record in F4H-1. Exceeded 94,000 feet 11 times and did not beat the Russians by the required 3%. Went over the top upside down and backwards once. We needed more thrust. Larry Flint took over afterwards and made it, but it was bested soon by USAF and Russians using reaction controls.
- (13) Have flown 270+ models of aircraft. Flew my own Bonanza across Atlantic twice while on active duty.
- (14) After retiring, manufactured cabin class Piper Aircraft, was on National Transportation Safety Board, was Administrator, FAA and flew our Jetstar to Beijing, amongst many other places, President of AOPA Air Safety Foundation, and now am Director of National Air and Space Museum and keep my glider in Minden, Nevada.
- (15) It's all been fun. I'd do it again.