



Jeffrey S. Ashby, Capt. USN (Ret.)
"Bones"

Date of Designation: 30 June 1978

Dates of Active Duty: December 1976 – February 2002.

Total Flight Hours: Total 8,000+, Jet 6000, Prop 1500, Helicopter 25, Space Shuttle 780.

Carrier/Ship Landings: Fixed wing: 1,001 (365 night).

Combat Missions: 63

Combat Tours:

Operation Desert Storm, Iraq - Jan-Mar 1991.
Operation Provide Comfort, Iraq - Jul-Sep 1993.
Operation Continue Hope, Somalia - Oct 1993.

Aviation Commands:

CO, VFA-94 - December 1993-February 1995.
CO, Navy Astronaut Office - March 1995-February 2002.

Combat Awards:

Distinguished Flying Cross with combat "V" (1991)
Navy Air Medal with combat "V" (4) (1991-1994)
ComNavAirPac Attack Aviator of the Year 1991

Awards:

Defense Superior Service Medal (2000)
Legion of Merit (2001)
Defense Meritorious Service Medal (2002)
Meritorious Service Medal (1995)
Navy Commendation Medal (3) (1985, 1987, 1990)
NASA Spaceflight Medal (3) (1999, 2001, 2002)
NASA Outstanding Leadership Medal (2003)
Other Navy and NASA decorations

Duty Assignment Chronology

09/72-12/76 NROTC, University of Idaho.
01/77-04/77 Aviation Indoctrination, Pensacola.
05/77-08/77 VT-3, Primary Flight Training, Whiting Field, Milton, FL (T-28).
09/77-02/78 VT-23, Basic Jet training, Kingsville, TX (T-2).
03/78-06/78 VT-21, Advanced Jet training, Kingsville, TX (TA-4J).
07/78-08/78 VA-127, Lemoore, CA (TA-4J).
09/78-03/79 VA-122, Lemoore, CA (A-7E, TA-7C).
04/79-06/82 VA-146, Lemoore, CA/*USS Constellation* (A-7E).
07/82-10/85 VX-5, China Lake, CA (A-7E, FA-18, A-4M, C206).
11/85-02/86 VFA-125, Lemoore, CA (FA-18A, TFA-18).
03/86-04/86 Navy Fighter Weapons School (Top Gun), Miramar, CA (FA-18A).
05/86-12/87 VFA-136, Jacksonville, FL/*USS Coral Sea* SEA (FA-18A).
01/88-11/88 USN Test Pilot School, Patuxent River, MD.
12/88-04/90 Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River, MD (FA-18C, TA-7C).
05/90-06/90 VFA-106, Jacksonville, FL (FA-18A).
07/90-12/91 VFA-195, Atsugi, Japan/*USS Midway* (FA-18C).
01/92-08/92 Strike Fighter Wing Pacific, VFA-125, Lemoore, CA (FA-18C, D).
09/92-11/93 VFA-94 Executive Officer, Lemoore, CA/*USS Abraham Lincoln* (FA-18C).
12/93-02/95 VFA-94 Commanding Officer, Lemoore, CA/*USS Abraham Lincoln* (FA-18C).
03/95-02/02 NASA Astronaut Office, Houston, TX (T-38N).

Summary of Significant Career Events

(1) Despite some questionable JO decisions, I was able to complete my Navy and NASA flying careers without mishap. But there were close calls – in Sep 1982, while flying a Cessna 206 out of China Lake on a night parts run, the aircraft engine failed and I executed a night deadstick landing on the desert bombing range. My passenger and Skipper, Capt “Holly” Hollandsworth, and I walked away unharmed and the aircraft flew again the next day. It was so dark, I didn’t see the ground until we touched down, but I never shared that fact with Holly.

(2) In 1990, while flying in the test wing at Patuxent, I was selected as the sole test pilot for night vision goggle (NVG) incorporation into the FA-18. I began with 12 hours of NVG flying in the front seat of a cobra helicopter, training that no doubt later saved my life. The initial low altitude NVG test flying was especially perilous and resulted in numerous close calls. I was subsequently qualified as the Navy’s first NVG instructor and was later wearing the goggles on a night mission over Iraq when enemy ground forces fired a SAM at my aircraft – that was an impressive sight.

(3) In February of 1991, while flying an FA-18 in Desert Storm, I located and destroyed an Iraqi Super Frelon helicopter that was loaded with anti-ship weapons and staged for attacking our aircraft carrier, *USS Midway*. The kill was notable because I used a “Walleye” TV-guided glide bomb and brought back video that showed the weapon impacting between the engines of that camouflaged helicopter

(4) Among the opportunities I was honored to have as VFA-94 CO was that of accepting the first women into my combat squadron in 1994. Those pioneering women worked hard alongside the men, often leading them, and made the squadron even better. VFA-94 was awarded the Battle E for that year.

(5) In 1997, while musing about the future culture of the International Space Station, I conceived of, and fabricated, a Space Station Ship’s logbook and Ship’s Bell that eventually found their way into space. The original bell now rests at the Museum of Naval Aviation in Pensacola, and the Ship’s Log will one day be returned to Earth prior to the fiery disposal of the orbiting ISS.

(6) In my final active duty Navy tour, I was assigned to lead the 35 Naval Officers assigned to the NASA Astronaut Office. That group of Naval Aviators was instrumental in building and commanding the International Space Station.

Summary of Post Military Events

(1) I completed three total space flights for a total of about 30 days in orbit. I was an active duty Naval Officer for the first two. My final spaceflight was made as a NASA Astronaut, after my retirement from the Navy. On that flight, I commanded Space Shuttle Atlantis on mission STS-112.

(2) After leaving the NASA astronaut office, I held positions as a Senior Liaison to Air Force Space Command and a Vice President at Alliant Technical Systems (ATK).

(3) I am currently working as the Chief of Mission Assurance at Blue Origin, a company whose mission is to enable safe and affordable transportation to space so that one day millions of humans can be living and working there.

Personal

(1) My late wife Diana was an incredibly witty and dedicated Navy spouse who was an essential element in my success as a Naval Aviator. Sadly, she passed from cancer at a young age. We co-founded the Melanoma Research Foundation, first with her energy, and later in her memory, to give hope to those with the disease.

(2) I currently live with my partner for life, Mary Bochain, in a somewhat remote cabin at Angels 10 in the Colorado Rocky Mountains. When not working on rockets, I can be found climbing and skiing the 14,000 ft peaks or casting for cutthroat trout in the high lakes.