



Thomas R. Mitchell, III Captain USN (Ret.)
 "Demon"

Hometown: Brevard, NC

High School and College Career:

Brevard High School 1961
 BS, Auburn University 1965

Dates on Active Duty: 16 DEC 1965 - 01 OCT 1992

Date Commissioned/Source: 16 DEC 1965 NROTC

Date of Designation: 27 APR 1967 V-25115

Total Flight Hours: 4,908 Accident Free

Carrier/Ship Landings: 1,083

Approximate Flight Hours:

Jet: 4,568 VAL: 3,829 VT: 736 Turboprop: 235 Prop: 98

Commands:

CO: VA-46, Battle "E" & Safety "S" winner; CLAW-1
 Bombing Derby winner -10/81-12/82
 CO: VA-122 - 09/85-12/86
 CO: FACSFAC San Diego - 08/90-09/92

Combat Tours:

Vietnam: VA-36, USS *INTREPID* (CVA 11), 4 JUN 1968 to
 8 FEB 1969

Combat Missions: 86 (A-4C)

Combat Awards:

6 Strike Flight Air Medals
 2 Navy Commendation Medals with Combat "V"



Non-Combat Awards:

Legion of Merit
 3 Meritorious Service Medals
 Two Battle "E" (VA-15 & VA-46)
 One Safety "S" (VA-46)

Duty Assignment Chronology

09/61-12/65 Auburn University NROTC
 01/66-04/67 Flight Training: NAS Pensacola, FL; NAAS
 Saufley Field, FL; NAS Meridian, MS;
 NAS Pensacola, FL; and NAS Kingsville,
 TX (T-34B, T-2A, TF-9, AF-9).
 05/67-10/67 VA-44, NAS Cecil Field, FL Fleet
 Replacement Pilot (A-4C).
 10/67-05/70 VA-36, USS *INTREPID* (1 Vietnam), USS
FORRESTAL (1 Med) (LSO, Schedules
 Officer (A-4C).
 05/70-05/71 VT-4, Instructor Pilot (LSO & Air-to-Air
 Gunnery) (T-2B/C).
 05/71-02/72 CNATRA Staff (CNATRA LSO & T-2
 Standardization) (T-2B/C).
 02/72-07/73 VA 45 Det 1 USS *INTREPID* (1 EastLant, 1
 North Atlantic & 1 Med Deployments)
 (Weapons Officer, Schedule Officer & LSO)
 (A-4E).
 07/73-10/75 VA-174 (IP, LSO, Weapons Training &
 Aircraft Division) (A-7A/B/C/E/T).
 10/75-06/78 VA-15 USS *AMERICA* (Ops, Maint &
 Admin) 2 Med Deployments and
 1 South American Deployment) (A-7E).
 06/78-02/80 COMLATWING ONE (Readiness Officer)
 (A-7E & TA-4J).
 02/80-07/80 VA-174 (FRS Training A-7E).
 07/80-12/82 VA-46 (CO/XO, USS *KENNEDY* (1 Med
 Deployment), USS *AMERICA*
 (1 Med Deployment) (A-7E).
 12/82-03/83 COMNAVAIRLANT (Air Officer Training).
 03/83-07/85 USS *NIMITZ* (Air Boss) (A-7E & S-3A).
 09/85-12/86 VA-122 (CO) (A-7E, TA-7C, O-2A & T-2C).

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Duty Assignment Chronology continued:

12/86-08/90 COMNAVAIRPAC Staff (Air Training Officer) (A-7E, TA-7C, O-2A, S-3A, C-2A).
08/90-09/92 FACSFAC San Diego (CO) (UC-12B).
1 OCT 1992 Retired from active duty!

Summary of Significant Career Events

- (1) Selected as permanent wingman (nugget) for CAG (Vietnam) when he flew with VA-36 (lots of stories).
- (2) Chosen to be CNATRA LSO and managed the transition of CQ training to T-2 squadrons in Meridian.
- (3) Deployed 13 of 14 months on USS *Intrepid*. As a 7 aviator and 5 A-4E detachment, we provided air coverage and made 157 interceptions of Soviet aircraft in 4 months. Returned home for three weeks and transition to a 22 aviator and 16 A-4E squadron to cover the Mediterranean for six months as the only carrier there.
- (4) Top Tailhook VA-45 Det 1.
- (5) Last Jet Trap (A-4E) on USS *Intrepid* (CVS 11) prior to her decommissioning.
- (6) Trained the initial group of Hellenic Air Force pilots to fly the A-7 Corsair II (A-7H).
- (7) "Have Gun" (Attack Top Gun) at NAS Oceana. Best sortie (2 F-14s v 1 A-7), splash 2 Tomcats!
- (8) Top Tailhook VA-15 and CVW-6 (USS *AMERICA*).
- (9) Flew air cover for the evacuation of Americans from Lebanon following the assassination of the U.S. Ambassador in 1976.
- (10) Designed the VALATS (VA Light Attack Training System). This plan ensured that each squadron pilot completed as many competitive exercises as possible. The plan included many exercises that were not previously included in readiness training. This played a major role in VA-15 winning the Battle "E".
- (11) As CLAW-1 Readiness Officer, used the VALATS model to support CNAL in building better training goals. Took this to COMLATWINGPAC to get East and West Coast working from the same page.
- (12) While at CLAW-1, I created the "Commodore's List" which was an award given to Light Attack individual aviators for highest excellence in competitive exercises.
- (13) Top Tailhook VA-46.
- (14) Led VA-46 as Individual winner and Top Squadron of 1982 Light Attack Wing Bombing Derby.

(15) As CO/XO of VA-46, the squadron won both the Battle "E" and Safety "S".

(16) While anchored in Haifa on USS *NIMITZ* (CDO), I had the privilege of arresting Michael Walker (John Walker's son) for espionage.

(17) I was aboard USS *NIMITZ* when we responded to the hijacking of TWA flight 847. *NIMITZ* made a high-speed run from the west side of Italy to Lebanon. We provided support until the hostages were released.

(18) As CO, VA-122, created a RAG FLAG training strike, using the IPs from the West Coast's FRSSs. This was done to boost IP morale and to think again about tactical integration utilizing all type of airwing assets.

(19) As RAG CO, I was able to save three Naval Aviators by keeping or restoring their Navy Wings.

(20) At COMNAVAIRPAC, two major projects were key in aligning East and West Coast doctrine. First was the creation of the Naval Aviation wide CNAL/CNAP Readiness and Training Manual which defined exact training requirements and a real measure of squadron readiness. Second, the orchestration of the joint COMNAVAIRPAC/COMNAVAIRLANT Instruction which unified carrier deck loading requirements and techniques. This was a major effort to properly configure CV's Navy-wide.

(21) I served four years on the San Diego Association of Government Airport committee as the military representative. It was a wild and crazy time as San Diego County wanted to take over parts or in some cases all of our military sites (NAS Miramar, NAS North Island, MCRD, NTC and more).

(22) My last duty was CO, FACSFAC San Diego, it was a great job with amazing personnel. I managed to check out as an Aircraft Commander in the C-12 Huron (UC-12B). This was a fun time flying up and down the West Coast and a few trips back East. I was able to get my Airline Transport Pilot rating on my last flight in the Navy!

Summary of Post Military Work

(1) I was blessed to get hired by Federal Express as a manager in their 727 Flight Training Department. I worked in management for 18 months and then was picked up for flying the line. I became a Line Check Airman and then worked in the 727 Flight Standards Office which was a great job. I spent two seasons (1996-97) as part of the FedEx Air Show team. This was really an amazing time working alongside Bob Hoover, the Blue Angels, the Thunderbirds, Patty Wagstaff, Sean D. Tucker and more! We actually flew a dynamic air show in a B-727 (the last 727 ever built) and an Airbus A300. We lived in Memphis for five years (1993-97) then moved back to Coronado, CA. I finished my FedEx career at the end of 2005 with over 4,000 hours in the B-727 during my 14 years of service.

(2) Coronado has been very good to us as I have been President of the Rotary Club of Coronado and served for almost 20 years as a volunteer docent at the Hotel del Coronado.

Associations/Memberships:

(1) Life memberships – Tailhook, A-7 Corsair II Association, ANA, MOAA.

(2) Skyhawk Association, Navy Memorial, Marine Memorial, Gray Falcons (FedEx), Auburn Alumni Association, Auburn “A” Club, Omicron Delta Kappa, Phi Kappa Tau.

(3) Board Member – Rotary Club of Coronado, Coronado Historical Association, Discover Coronado