



**Gary R. Van Gysel, Col USMC (Ret.)**  
 "Gazelle"

Date of Designation: July 3, 1967      NA# V-35208

Dates of Active Duty: June 1965 – January 1992

Total Flight Hours: 5,100

Carrier/Ship Landings: Fixed wing: 22 Rotary: 5

Approximate Flight Hours:

Jet: 4800 Prop: 180 VF/VA: 4000/800 Helo: 120

Combat Tours:

Vietnam: 1968-1969 (253 combat missions)

Commands:

CO, VMFA 323, September 1982 - July 1984

MAG 31, May 1987 – July 1989

Combat Awards:

3 Single Mission Air Medals

20 Strike/Flight Air Medals

Navy Commendation Medal Combat V

Awards:

3 Meritorious Service Medals

2 Legion of Merit Medals

Combat Action Ribbon

### **Duty Assignment Chronology**

6/65-1/66      The Basic School, Student, Quantico, VA.  
 2/66-7/67      Flight School, Student, Pensacola, Meridian,  
 Beeville (T-34, T-2, F-9).  
 7/67-7/68      VMFA 312, Maint Admin/QA, Beaufort, SC,  
 (F-4B).  
 7/68-5/69      VMFA 314, S-4 Officer, Chu Lai, VN (F-4B).  
 5/69-8/69      VMFA 122, QA Officer, Iwakuni, Japan  
 (F-4B).



8/69-6/74      VMFAT 101, Maint billets, Yuma, AZ (F-4B).  
 6/74-7/75      MWSG 17, Ops Officer, Iwakuni, Japan,  
 (TA-4J, F-4B).  
 7/75-7/77      VMFA 251, Ops Officer, Beaufort, SC (F-4B).  
 7/77-7/78      H&MS 31, Executive Officer, Beaufort, SC,  
 (F-4B, TA-4J, C-117).  
 7/78-2/79      Armed Forces Staff College, Student, Norfolk,  
 VA.  
 2/79-2/81      F/A-18 Fleet Introduction Team, Asst Project  
 Officer, Lemoore, CA (TA-4J, A-7E).  
 2/81-9/82      VFA 125, Executive Officer, Lemoore, CA,  
 (A-7E, F/A-18).  
 9/82-7/84      VMFA 323, Commanding Officer, El Toro,  
 CA (F/A-18).  
 7/84-7/85      Air War College, Student, Montgomery, AL.  
 7/85-7/86      3rd MARDIV, Air Officer, Okinawa, Japan.  
 7/86-7/89      MAG 31, Executive Officer and Commanding  
 Officer, Beaufort, SC (F/A-18, TA-4J).  
 7/89-1/92      AIRLANT, D/CS Marine Matters, Norfolk,  
 VA (F/A-18, CH-46).  
 1/92-Present MDA/Boeing, Business Development,  
 Beaufort, SC.

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

- (1) Colonel Gary R. Van Gysel's career was spent mostly in the cockpit, flying Phantoms, Skyhawks, A-7E Corsairs and Hornets. He amassed over 5000 accident free hours in fighter and attack aircraft and flew 253 combat missions in Vietnam. He held operational flying billets in the following squadrons: VMFA 312, 314, 122, 251, 323, VMFAT-101 and VFA-125.
  - (2) Following Vietnam, then, Capt Van Gysel was sent to El Toro, CA to assist in the standup of the first Marine Fleet Readiness Squadron (FRS), VMFAT-101. Assigned as the Pilot Training Officer, he wrote the Phantom Aircrew Training Manual and developed the Basic Air Combat Maneuvering and Fighter Tactics
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### Summary of Significant Career Events continued

syllabus for the Phantom. As the fighter syllabus lead and the squadrons first Air Combat Tactic Instructor (ACTI), he was responsible for the training of future Marine Fighter Pilots.

- (3) Gary is probably best known for his involvement in the standup of the Hornet Program. Because of his experience in standing up the first Phantom FRS (VMFAT-101) in 1969, he was chosen to be the Assistant Project Officer of the F/A-18 Fleet Introduction Team. This was a Navy/Marine Corps team chartered to plan for the introduction of the Hornet. After doing the planning for the standup to the first Hornet squadron, the Navy FRS, VFA-125, then LtCol Van Gysel, went on to execute the plan as the Executive Officer. VFA-125 was a first of a kind squadron; half Navy, half Marine. Gary was one of the officers most responsible for it's inception, it's standup and it's execution. Possessing close to 45 aircraft and responsible for all initial Hornet Fleet training, this squadron produced all Fleet Hornet pilots for a five year period until the standup of the East Coast FRS.
- (4) The first three squadrons to transition to the Hornet were Marine squadrons trained by VFA-125 in Lemoore, CA. After two years as Executive Officer of the FRS, then, LtCol Van Gysel took command of VMFA 323, the second Marine squadron to transition to the Hornet. During the two years in command he was instrumental in developing the tactics that are used today in flying the Hornet. Following command, he spent two years away from aviation while assigned to the Air War College and 3rd Marine Division. As a Colonel, Gary, assumed command of Marine Aircraft Group 31 and oversaw the transition of East Coast Marine Phantoms Squadrons to the Hornet.
- (5) Following his retirement from the Marine Corps in 1992, Gary continued to work for Naval Aviation and the Marine Corps as the East Coast Marine Field Representative for McDonnell Douglas and then Boeing. Serving as the liaison between Marine senior leadership and the senior leadership of these companies, he has been able to ensure the modernization and sustainment of the current Force. He will retire from this position in 2009.