



Melvin H. Sautter, COL, USMC (Ret.)
 “Mel”

Date of Designation: 5 May 1954 NA#: T4470

Dates of Active Duty: 2 July 1952 - 30 September 1981

Total Flight Hours: 4,620

Carrier/Ship Landings: Fixed wing: 73

Approximate Flight Hours:

Jet: 3,798 Prop: 674 Helo: 148 VF/VA: 3,826

Other: (General Aviation) SE Prop, 1,565

Combat Tours:

Vietnam: October 1966-September 1967

360 Combat Missions, (F8E)

Aviation Commands:

CO, VMF (AW) 232, Danang, RVN, Mar. - Sep. 1967

CO, MCAS Kaneohe, Hawaii, Oct. 1978 - Jul. 1981

Combat Awards:

Distinguished Flying Cross
 Bronze Star with Combat “V”
 I Single Mission Air Medal
 18 Strike Flight Air Medals

Duty Assignment Chronology

7/52-1/53 16th Special Basic School, Student,
 Quantico, VA.
 2/53-6/54 Naval Aviator, Student, Pensacola, FL.
 Kingsville, TX. (SNJ-5, SNB-5, F6F, TV-2,
 F9F-2).
 7/54-10/55 VMF-312, Operations (Training), Cherry
 Point, NC. (F9F-4, FJ-2, TV-2, SNB-5)
 11/55-5/56 VMO-2 Det, Officer in Charge, Camp Fuji,
 Japan (OE-1, HTL-5)



5/56-1/57 VMF-235, Adjutant, Atsugi, Japan
 (FJ-2, FJ-4).
 2/57-9/57 Communications-Electronics School,
 Student, Quantico, VA. (SNB-5, OE-1,
 T-34B).
 10/57-10/59 MWSG-37, Comm-Elect Officer, El Toro,
 CA. (SNB-5, T-28B, FJ-4, TV-2, F9F-8T)
 10/59-8/60 VMF-451, Avionics Officer, El Toro, CA.
 (F8U-2).
 9/60-6/61 Amphibious Warfare School, Student,
 Quantico, VA. (SNB-5, T-28B).
 7/61-4/62 VMF-251, Aircraft Maintenance Officer,
 Beaufort, SC. & CAG-10, CVA 38 (F8U-1E).
 4/62-6/63 VMF-333, Executive Officer, Beaufort, SC.
 (F8U-2, F8C).
 7/63-7/64 Task Force 79, Comm-Elect Officer,
 Okinawa, Japan (0-1B, TC-45J, TF-9J).
 8/64-7/65 MACS-1, Operations Officer, Yuma, AZ.
 (TC-45J, T-33B, F8C, F8E).
 8/65-3/67 VMF (AW) 232, Executive Officer, Kaneohe,
 HI., Iwakuni, Japan and Danang, RVN
 (F8D, F8E)
 3/67-9/67 VMF (AW) 232, Commanding Officer,
 Danang, RVN, TRANSPAC to CONUS
 (F8E).
 10/67-8/70 HQ, FMFPac, Fixed Wing Operations, Camp
 Smith, HI. (T-1A, T-28B, UC-45J).
 9/70-7/71 Marine Air Reserve Training Detachment,
 Executive Officer, Dallas, TX. (F8C, F8H,
 F8K, T33-B).
 8/71-8/72 USAF Air War College, Student,
 Montgomery, AL.
 8/72-11/72 VMFA-312, F4 Transition, Cherry Pt. NC.
 (TA4F, TA4J, F4B, F4J).
 12/72-12/73 HQ, First MAW, G3 Operations, Iwakuni,
 Japan (TA4J).
 1/74-8/77 HQ, USMC, Director, Aviation Logistics,
 Arlington, VA.
 8/77-9/78 HQ USMC, Executive Assistant,
 Requirements and Programs.

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Duty Assignment Chronology continued

9/78-7/81 MCAS, Commanding Officer, Kaneohe, HI. (HH46A).
8/81-9/81 HQ, USMC, Retirement Arlington, VA.

Summary of Significant Career Events

(1) Deployed TAD 10 Mar 60 with three F8U-2s and one F3D-2 for OPEVAL of Hawk surface-to-air missile defense capabilities at White Sands Proving Grounds, NM. Conducted unrestricted altitudes, closure rates, and direction of attacks to determine Hawk radar acquisition parameters. Operation terminated when F3D crashed after striking a cattle gate. Both crew members ejected without injury. OPEVAL identified several Hawk engineering and procedural changes required to attain combat readiness.

(2) Awarded honorary title "Top Gun" of Second Marine Aircraft Wing by Major General Mangrum for FY63. Achieved highest score ever recorded for air-to-air gunnery with F8 Crusader during strict Competitive Exercise Rules at 20 and 30 thousand feet while deployed to NAS Roosevelt Roads, PR.

(3) As Executive Officer VMF 333, led the first F8 division to McCalla Field, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba 7 Nov. 1962 in response to Cuban Missile Crisis. Conducted off-shore high and low CAP missions covering egress of USMC/USN ECM and Photo over-flights. Provided fighter escort missions shadowing USAF EB-47 ELINT off-shore operations. Established discreet emergency landing/turn around facilities at Montego Bay, Jamaica for any service aircraft supporting the Cuban Operation. The bingo facilities were never utilized to my knowledge. Returned to MCAS Beaufort, SC 21 Dec. 1962 after 24 missions without executing an intercept, charging the guns or arming the sidewinders - just another Cold War stand-off.

(4) Assigned as Executive Officer VMF (AW) 232 1 Aug. 1965 to prepare squadron for deployment to RVN. Transitioned from F8Ds to F8Es with hard points to carry MER/TER configurations for CAS Training at Kahoolawe, HI. and Okinawa enroute to Danang RVN for combat Operations. Assigned as Commanding Officer of the "Red Devils" 22 Mar. 1967 for remainder of RVN Tour, 360 combat missions, and TRANSPAC to CONUS. Awarded recognition by Chance Vought Aircraft, 30 Aug. 1967, as first of only two Marine Aviators to ever log over 2000 F8 Crusader hours.

(5) Assigned to HQ, Fleet Marine Forces, Pacific as Air Operations Officer 23 Oct. 1967. Developed and implemented SOP for TRANSPAC of USMC and USN fixed Wing aircraft by coordinating and integrating First and Third MAW KC-130 aerial refuelers. Conducted first of three multiple fighter/attack squadrons simultaneous redeployments without incident or accident during 1968-1970. Awarded Meritorious Service Medal by Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet for support of the complex Redeployment Program.

(6) Wrote and published "Principles for the Control of Air Support Assets Over Joint Land Combat Operations" as Air War College student at Maxwell AFB, AL. Written in response to advocates for USAF's proclaimed Single Management Doctrine during Vietnam War. Received the Air War College Commandant's Outstanding Publication Award for 1972. Control of air support over joint operations continues to evolve today, while single management of aviation assets no longer exists!

(7) Designated Operation Homecoming escort for returning POW Lieutenant Colonel Edison Miller, USMC while assigned to G3 Operations, First MAW Iwakuni, Japan. Reported for TAD at Clark, AFB, PI to meet Miller who, to everyone's surprise, arrived on first C-141 at 4:20 p.m. 12 Feb. 1973. Participated in the debriefings for five days because Miller and Commander Walter Wilber USN, who had been given preferential treatment by NVN, returned ahead of their contemporaries by shootdown date! Escorted Miller to Camp Pendleton, CA. to terminate my escort responsibilities after 10 very interesting days. Returned to Iwakuni to complete sixth unaccompanied overseas tour.

(8) As Commanding Officer, Marine Corps Air Station, Kaneohe, HI., provided operational support to First Marine Brigade and their dependents to enhance their quality of life. Supported 42 TRANSPAC evolutions involving more than 700 Navy and Marine aircraft without a mishap. Consider this farewell tour the most rewarding for the positive impact on the lives of Marines and their families. Awarded the Legion of Merit by the Secretary of the Navy for services rendered 1978-1981.

(9) Retired 30 Sep. 1981 after thirty years of interesting, fun filled memories that occasionally were rather exciting. Remain active in Marine Corps Aviation Association since its' inception, served as Commander, Darden-Schilt MCAA Squadron, Norfolk, VA for three years, member of the Hampton Roads Squadron of the Association of Naval Aviation, NAS Oceana. Accepted as a member of The Golden Eagles, The Early and Pioneer Naval Aviators Association, in 2003.

(10) Married Jane, my best friend and companion, 16 June 1955. We have three children and four grandchildren.