



**Thomas H. Chapman, Commander, USNR**  
(Naval Aviator Number 249)

Landing a World War I vintage "flying Jenny" atop a hangar does not make for longevity, but Cmdr. Thomas H. Chapman, 70, USNR is living proof that it can (or could) be done. And because he has reached "three score and ten" Chapman, one of the Navy's pioneering pilots, is retiring today from his post as chief of a materiel inspection group in the Federal Aviation Agency's Bureau of Facilities and Materiel. Chapman, who was designated in 1918 as U. S. Naval Aviator No. 249, staged his hangar-top landing at a British Royal Flying Corps school in Ontario, Canada, while he was a cadet there in 1917. One of his four Navy class was the late Defense Secretary James V. Forrestal. Chapman's Jenny ran out of gas while he was on a sofa training mission and he had to settle for the hangar top when he could not make it back to the field. "The instructors were not so concerned about that, but they confined me to my barracks for impersonating an Army flier," Chapman said with a laugh. He explained that after the Army heard how the British were training Navy fliers 20 Army cadets were sent to Canada to win their wings. Chapman became interested in aviation just after the turn of the century. He recalls seeing the Wright Brothers make demonstration flights in their flying machine for the Army at Fort Myer about 1908. A veteran of more than 40 years of Government service including active duty in both World Wars—Chapman began his work in Civil Aviation as Airways Extension Superintendent in the Commerce Department's Bureau of Lighthouses in 1927.