



James C. Donaldson, Jr., Rear Admiral, USN
"Jim"

James Carmichael Donaldson, Jr., was born in Bessemer, Alabama, on December 11, 1921. He entered the U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, on appointment from his native state in 1939 and graduated with the Class of 1943.

After graduation, he participated in several engagements in the Pacific in World War II prior to becoming a Naval Aviator. As a Naval Aviator he served in several carrier based squadrons including a bombing squadron and a night fighter squadron.

In 1953, he attended the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. Upon completion of this study, he assumed command of All-Weather Fighter Squadron SEVENTY-ONE as a Commander and served in this capacity until 1956.

From 1956 through 1958, he served as Aide to the Vice Chief of Naval Operations. In 1958 he took command of Attack Carrier Air Group ONE. In 1960, he served as the Attack Carrier Air Group Training Officer on the Staff of Commander Naval Air Force, Atlantic Fleet.

In 1962, he attended the Industrial College of the Armed Forces. During this period he also earned the degree of Master of Business Administration from George Washington University. He next reported as Operations Officer on the staff of Commander Carrier Division Four. In July 1964, he assumed command of USS *Hermitage* (LSD-34).

In December 1965, he became Commanding Officer of the attack carrier USS *Hancock* (CVA-19). He commanded this attack carrier during operations in the Tonkin Gulf off the coast of Vietnam. For his service as Commanding Officer of

Hancock during her combat operations, he was awarded the Legion of Merit. The Navy Unit Commendation was awarded the USS *Hancock* for outstanding services in Southeast Asia during this same period.

After his selection for Flag Rank, he became Director of the Fleet Operations Division in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations. In October 1968, he was assigned the additional duty as Director, Naval Reconnaissance Center in the Office of the CNO. He was awarded a gold star in lieu of the Legion of Merit for his service in locating the sunken submarine *Scorpin* during this tour of duty.

He assumed command of Carrier Division THREE in September 1969. His Division conducted combat operations in Southeast Asia in 1969 and 1970. Admiral Donaldson was awarded a second gold star in lieu of the Legion of Merit for this service. He has also been awarded the National Order of Vietnam, Fourth Class and Fifth Class, and two Gallantry Crosses with Palm by the Government of South Vietnam.

Following this combat duty he assumed duty as Deputy Director for Operations (Reconnaissance and Electronic Warfare), Organization of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal "for exceptionally meritorious service...from July 1970 to August 1972..." In August 1972 he reported as Study Director of the Fleet Reorganization Study, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department and in March 1973 was ordered detached for duty as Commander Fleet Air, Western Pacific.

His home town address was West Lake, Bessemer, Alabama. He was married to the former Margaret Ann Mitchell of Bessemer, and they had three daughters: Linda Margaret, Laura Elizabeth, and Susan Rutledge Donaldson.

Medals and Awards.

Legion of Merit
American Defense Service Medal with star
American Campaign Medal
Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with silver star (five operations)
World War II Victory Medal
Navy Occupation Service Medal
National Defense Service Medal with bronze star
Vietnam Service Medal

Citation.

Legion of Merit: Awarded for the outstanding manner in which he commanded the USS *Hancock* during her combat deployment. "...During this period Captain Donaldson demonstrated aggressive combat leadership and the outstanding ability to develop and in a sustained series of devastating air strike operations. As Commanding Officer he continuously demonstrated superb seamanship, outstanding professional knowledge and devotion to his ship and crew. Through his leadership his ship was maintained ready at all time and

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met every combat commitment ... during the entire period.”

Duty Assignment Chronology

6/42-10/42 Naval Training School, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N. H. (Instructor).
10/42-1/43 Naval Training Station, Norfolk, Virginia. (Antiaircraft training).
1/43-2/43 Fire Control School, Wash., D. C. (Instruction).
2/43-10/44 USS *Iowa* (Division Officer).
10/44-4/45 Naval Air Training Base, Ottumwa Iowa (Instruction).
4/45-1/46 Naval Air Training Base, Corpus Christi, Texas (Flight training, designated Naval Aviator, January 6, 1946)
1/46-6/46 Naval Air Training Base, Jacksonville, Fla. (Instruction).
6/46-7/46 Bombing Squadron NINETY-EIGHT (Flight Officer).
8/46-8/47 Bombing Squadron FIVE (Executive Officer).
8/47-7/48 Staff, Commander Fleet Air, West Coast (Flag Lieutenant and Athletic Director).
7/48-7/50 Night Fighter Squadron ONE (Communications Officer, Ass't to Executive Officer).
7/50-4/51 Aeronautical Engineering Duty School, Memphis, Tenn. (Instruction)
4/51-7/52 Naval Ordnance Test Station, Inyokern, Calif. (Officer in Charge, Atlas Project Pilot)
7/52-6/53 Naval War College, Newport, RI. (Instruction).
6/53-1/56 Fighter Squadron SEVENTY-ONE (Executive Officer, Commanding Officer).
1/56-9/56 Naval Air Station, Quonset Point, RI. (Flight Division, Operations).
9/56-10/58 Aide to the Vice Chief of Naval Operations, Navy Department, Washington, D. C.
11/58-10/60 Carrier Air Group ONE (Commander).
10/60-7/62 Staff, Naval Air Force, Atlantic Fleet (Attack Carrier Air Group Training Officer).
7/62-6/63 Industrial College of the Armed Forces, Washington, D. C. (Instruction).
6/63-7/64 Staff, Commander Carrier Division FOUR (Operations Officer).
8/64-10/65 USS *Hermitage* (Commanding Officer).
12/65-10/66 USS *Hancock* (Commanding Officer).
10/66-10/67 Naval Air Systems Command Headquarters, Washington, D.C.
10/67-9/69 OPNAV. Director Fleet Operations Division. In 10/68, assigned additional duty as Director, Naval Reconnaissance Center, OPNAV.
9/69-7/70 Commander Carrier Division THREE.
7/70-8/72 Deputy Director, Operations (Reconnaissance and Electronic Warfare), JCS.
8/72-3/73 OPNAV. Study Director, Fleet Reorganization Study.
3/73-?? Commander, Fleet Air Western Pacific.