



**Eugene P. Rankin, Captain, USN (Ret.)**  
 "Gene"

Date of Designation: 24 January 1941 NA # 7092

Dates of Active Duty: 3 June 1937 - 1 March 1967

Total Flight Hours: 5,200

Carrier/Ship Landings: Fixed wing: 89 Rotary: 8

Approximate Flight Hours:

Jet: 25 Prop: 5,150 VF: 300  
 VP: 3,200 VS: 100 Other: Administrative acft, -1,500

Combat Tours:

WW II: VP-81, Panama, Key West, Trinidad, Guantanamo, Dec. 1941 - June 1943. 125 missions.  
 WW II: VP-81 Black Cat Squadron, Soloman Islands, Munda, Bougainville, Oct. 1943 - June 1944 85 missions.

Aviation Commands:

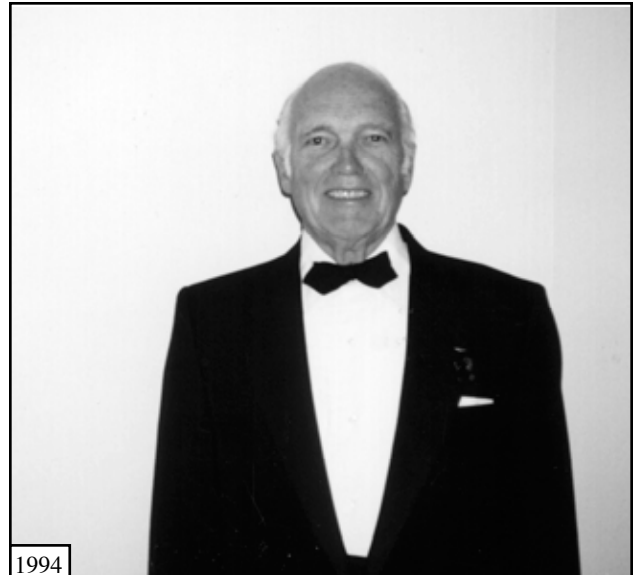
CO, VP-81 Jul. 1943 - Jun. 1944;  
 CO, VF-1B aboard USS *Midway*, May 1947 - May 1948;  
 CO, VC-8 Jan - May 1953;  
 Acting CO, USS *Rendova* (CVE-114), Apr. - Jul. 1954;  
 CO, USS *Pine Island* (AV-12), Jul. 1961 - Jun. 1962;  
 CO, USS *Kearsarge* (CVS-33), Jul. 1962 - Jul. 1963.

Combat Awards:

Legion of Merit (WW II)  
 Distinguished Flying Cross for World's Record Long Distance Flight - 1946.

**Duty Assignment Chronology**

7/37-4/39 USS *Colorado*, Junior Officer.  
 5/39-7/40 USS *Anderson* (DD-411), Deck Officer.  
 8/40-3/41 Flight training, Pensacola, FL.



4/41-8/41 VP-43, NAS Sands Point, NAS North Island and NAS Norfolk.  
 9/41-12/42 VP-81, NAS Key West and NAS Coco Solo.  
 1/43-3/43 VP-81 Detachment, Coast Guard Air Station, Elizabeth City, NC.  
 4/43-6/43 XO, VP-81, Trinidad, San Juan and Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.  
 7/43-10/43 CO, VP-81, NAS North Island, CA.  
 10/43-6/44 CO, VP-81 (Black Cat Squadron flying PBY-5A), Henderson Field, Guadalcanal, Munda and Bougainville.  
 7/44-11/46 Bureau of Aeronautics - Armament Division.  
 8/46-10/46 TAD, Lockheed Burbank, Perth, Australia, and Columbus, Ohio (Truculent Turtle Flight).  
 12/46-4/47 Carrier refresher course, NAS Pensacola, NAS Jacksonville and Cecil Field, FL.  
 5/47-9/47 CO, VF-1B, NAS Oceana, VA.  
 9/47-6/48 CO, VF-1B aboard USS *Midway* (CV-42), Guantanamo and Mediterranean deployment.  
 7/48-10/50 Assistant to Executive Officer, Bancroft Hall, U. S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, MD.  
 11/50-12/50 Bombardier School, Albuquerque, NM.  
 12/50-2/51 Ops. Officer, VC-6, NAS Moffet Field, CA.  
 3/51-12/52 Ops. Officer, Heavy Attack Wing Staff.  
 1/53-4/53 CO, VC-8, NAS Patuxent River, MD.  
 5/53-6/54 XO, USS *Rendova* (CVE-114).  
 6/54-7/55 OPNAV Staff (OP-36 Nuclear Weapons and OP-65 Strategic Plans).  
 7/55-6/57 CINCLANT/CINLANTFLT (Operations staff and OpCon Center).  
 7/57-5/59 OPNAV Staff (OP-56 - Military Construction)  
 5/59-6/61 CINCPAC (Plans staff- General War Plans).  
 7/61-6/62 CO, USS *Pine Island* (AV-12).  
 7/62-7/63 CO, USS *Kearsarge* (CVS-33).  
 8/63-6/65 Chief of Staff, Fleet Air San Diego, CA.  
 7/65-2/67 Inspector General, 11th Naval District, San Diego, CA.  
 3/1/67 Retired from active duty.

## Summary of Significant Career Events

- (1) Youngest CO of a patrol plane squadron in Pacific, 1943.
- (2) As copilot of XP2V, established a New York to Los Angeles coast-to-coast speed record, June 1946.
- (3) As copilot of first production model of P2V-1 nicknamed the TRUCULENT TURTLE, established a new World's Long Distance Flight record Sept. 29-Oct. 1 1946, flying 11,256 miles non-stop and unrefueled from Perth, Australia to Columbus, Ohio in 55hrs 17 min. Broke previous record by over 3,000 miles. The TURTLE record stood for 16 years for all aircraft (broken by USAF B-52) and for all propeller driven aircraft for 40 years (broken by VOYAGER flying around the world).
- (4) As CO of VF-1B aboard USS *Midway* (CV-42) squadron was designated best fighter squadron in Atlantic Fleet for 1947-48.
- (5) Was first Commander to be CO of a Heavy Attack squadron. The three other squadrons had Captains as CO.
- (6) As CO, USS *Kearsarge* (CVS-33) recovered Wally Schirra after his MERCURY capsule landed 100 miles north of Midway Island after 6 orbits, October 3, 1962. Also recovered Gordon Cooper after his MERCURY capsule landed following his 22 orbit flight May 16, 1963. He also landed about 100 miles North of Midway Island in the Pacific. These were the first astronauts to land in the Pacific, the first two to be witnessed landing and the first two to be recovered by an aircraft carrier.

