



**Hawley Russell, CAPT, USN (Ret.)**  
 “Monk”

Date of Designation: December 1938

Dates of Active Duty: August 1935 -

Combat Tours:

WW II: USS *Wasp* and USS *Lexington*

Aviation Commands:

CO, VF-33, April 1943-March 1944  
 CO, Night Attack and Combat Training Unit Atlantic, Dec. 1944 -Sep. 1945  
 CO, CAG-17, Jul. 1947 - Apr. 1949  
 CO, Air Development Squadron 3, Sep. 1953 - Jul. 1959  
 CO, USS *Cimarron*, Apr. 1958 - Jul. 1959

Combat Awards:

Distinguished Flying Cross  
 Air Medals  
 Bronze Star  
 Purple Heart

**Duty Assignment Chronology**

8/35 Enlisted in Navy.  
 8/35-9/35 Appointed Aviation Cadet. Naval Reserve Aviation Base, Squantum, MA, (Student).  
 9/35-12/36 NAS Pensacola (Flight Training).  
 1/37-12/38 Commissioned Ensign 12/16/38. Joined USS *West Virginia* as naval aviator.  
 12/38-7/41 NAS Pensacola (Flight Instructor).  
 7/41-3/42 Joined USS *Wasp* in Mediterranean as Hangar Deck Officer. *Wasp* headed for the Pacific.  
 3/42-10/42 USS *Wasp* as Operations Officer. Remained on board until *Wasp* sunk in battle of Coral Sea.  
 11/42-4/43 VF-16, USS *Lexington* (Operations Officer).

5/43-3/44 Transferred to CVE USS *Brenton* as CO, VF-33. At Rabaul, shot down his 4th enemy aircraft. Although wounded, he flew his damaged aircraft back to base and crash landed.  
 3/44-12/44 Staff COMFAIRQUONSET (O-in-C, Fighter Training Unit).  
 12/44-9/45 CO, Night Attack and Combat Training Unit Atlantic, Quonset Point, RI.  
 9/45-7/46 XO, Night Development Squadron Atlantic, Key West, FL.  
 7/46-7/47 General Line School, Newport, RI.  
 7/47-4/49 CO, CAG-17. Made first jet landings on USS *Saipan*.  
 5/49-6/50 Staff, COMFAIRJAX (Training Officer).  
 7/50-7/52 Staff, Office of the CNO (Fighter Tactics and Training).  
 8/52-8.53 XO, USS *Tarawa*.  
 9/53-7/55 CO, Air Development Squadron 3. Worked on air defense, TACAN and in-flight refueling of fighters.  
 7/55-6/56 Naval War College, Newport, RI (Student).  
 7/56-4/58 Staff CNATRA, NAS Pensacola (Director of Training).  
 4/58-7/59 CO, Oiler USS *Cimarron*

**Significant Career Events**

(From a squadron mate and shipmate)

It early 1943, LCDR. Hawley Russell was appointed as Commanding Officer of newly designated Fighting Squadron 33. The squadron consisted of 36 pilots of whom a half dozen were experienced veterans and the rest youngsters fresh out of flight school. Known as “Monk” for his hulking size, dark appearance and uncompromising demand for competence, Monk had only a couple of months in which to whip this fledgling group into a disciplined and practiced team that could face the skilled Japanese pilots that had conquered the South Pacific and were now approaching the shores of Australia. During the squadron’s brief training period, every single day, seven days a week, Monk lectured

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and schooled and flew with his youngsters, drilling and molding and remolding their response to danger and opportunity. He never slacked off, knowing from experience that each individual's chance for survival, once overseas, would depend entirely how well he had taught them and how well they had assimilated and could apply what they had learned.

Monk was not just a teacher, he was a leader who never played favorites and established by example a very high level of esprit de corps and bonding among his new pilots. Soon they were sent overseas into action and, starting from Guadalcanal, VF-33 quickly transpired from neophyte status into the very front rank as a crucial element of the "Cactus Air Force", a motley assemblage of U. S. and Anzac aviators thrown hastily together to block, and roll back the Japanese advance in the Solomon Islands. In battle after battle, one island at a time, Monk Russell's squadron led the way in relentlessly defeating the best Japan had to offer and thus finally ending Japan's one-time invincible threat to the South Pacific. VF-33 lost a third of its pilots and Monk himself was severely wounded, but his squadron destroyed 76 enemy aircraft and proudly represented the highest ideals of the U. S. Navy.