



Joseph G. Smith, Captain, USN (Ret.)
 "Joe"

Date of Designation: 1939 NA # 6172

Dates of Active Duty: 31 October 1939 - 31 August 1969

Total Flight Hours: Over 9,000 hours (5,898 military)

Combat Tours:

WW II: Scouting Squadron Two, 4-12 May 1942, USS *Lexington* (until sunk) and USS *Yorktown*. Battle of the Coral Sea.

Aviation Commands:

CO, VF(N)-106, 1944 - 1945
 CO, VF-19, 1945 - 1946
 CO, VF-61, 1950 - 1951
 Director, Naval Test Pilot School, Patuxent River, MD.
 CO, Air Development Squadron FOUR (VX-4), 1959-1961
 CO, NAS Point Mugu, CA., 1961 - 1963
 CO, USS *Hyades* (AF-28), 1963 - 1964
 CO, USS *Intrepid* (CVS-11), 1964 - 1965

Combat Awards:

Navy Cross
 2 Air Medals
 Presidential Unit Citation

Duty Assignment Chronology

1938 U.S. Army 387th Field Artillery Regiment - Second Lieutenant - Active Duty June 1938 (Later resigned to enter Navy).
 1938-39 Naval flight training, NAS Pensacola, FL. Completed course, single and multi-engine land and sea from VF to VP.
 1939-42 Scouting Squadron TWO (Scout and Dive Bombing Squadron) aboard USS *Lexington*. During Coral Sea patrol, sighted and relayed position of 2 Japanese carriers, 4 heavy cruisers and many destroyers. Awarded Navy



Joe Smith & Adm. Tom Connolly beside F-14 at Point Mugu.

Cross for ensuing action. Was one of last planes finally launched from burning and sinking *Lexington*. Landed on USS *Yorktown* after fighter CAP mission.
 1942-44 Staff, Training Command, Corpus Christi, Texas - Training Officer.
 1944-45 CO, VF(N) 106 - Night Fighter Squadron. COMCARDIV 11 Staff - Assistant OPS for Night Fighter Operations.
 1945-46 CO, VF-19 (F8F) Fighter Squadron.
 1946-47 General Line School, Newport, Rhode Island - Student.
 1947-48 Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River, MD., Tactical Test Division - Test Pilot and Project Officer.
 1949-50 Empire Test Pilots School, Farnborough, England - Exchange Duty with Royal Air Force and Ministry of Supply. Awarded the McKenna Trophy for best test pilot (1st American to get it).
 1950-51 CO, VF 61 (F9F) based aboard USS *Coral Sea* and USS *F. D. Roosevelt*.
 1951-54 Director, Naval Test Pilot School, Patuxent River, MD.
 1954-56 Operational Development Force Staff - Special Weapons Officer.
 1956-57 USS *Valley Forge* (CV-45) - Operations Officer.
 1957-58 Bureau of Aeronautics; Head, Fighter Design Branch.
 1958-59 Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island - Senior Course.
 1959-61 CO, VX-4, Air Launched Guided Missile Development.
 1961-63 CO, Naval Air Station, Point Mugu - Navy's Missile and Space Base.
 1963-64 CO, USS *Hyades* (AF 28).
 1964-65 CO, USS *Intrepid* (CVS 11). Picked up astronauts Gus Grissom and John Young after

Duty Assignment Chronology continued

Gemini GT-3 flight, March 23, 1965.
Intrepid won COMNAVAIRLANT FY-64 Battle Efficiency Pennant award and four of the Departmental awards (Air, Engineering, Operations and Weapons).
6/65-12/68 CNO Office (OP-91 & OP-96) - CNO Project Officer for Tactical Aviation Study - Center for Naval Analysis.
1/68 -8/69 Headquarters, Naval Material Command - Deputy Chief of Naval Material (Management and Organization)
8/31/69 Retired from active duty.
1969-74 Grumman Aerospace Corporation. Director of Pt. Mugu operations for GAC.

Summary of Significant Career Events

(1) Aircraft flown include: N3N-1/2/3 (Land and sea), NS-1, N2S-2, O3U-3, SU-2, SBU-1/2, O2U-1 (Floats and 4 powder cat shots), PD-1, P3M-1, PM-2, NJ-1, TG-2, TBD-1, F4B-3/4, SBC-3/4, BT-1, SBD-2/3/4/5/6, SNJ-1/2/3/4/5, GB-1/2, GH-1/3, SNV-1, OS2U-3, R3D-2, F3F-2, PBV-3, R50-2, N2T-1, SNC1, SNB-1/ 2/3E, JRB-6, J2F-3, F6F-3, F6F-5N/5E, FM-1, F6F-5P, F4U-1/4, TBM-3/3E, SB2C-4, F8F-1/2/2N and XF8F-1, F7F-3/3N, HE-1, P51-D, P61-B, R5C-2, PB4Y-2, P59-B, XBT2D-1, NE-1, FD-1, F26-1, PB4Y-1, BT2D-1N, AM-1, FH-1, XFX-1 (Straight Wing), FJ-2 (Swept Wing), F2H-1, AD-2/3/3N/4N, P2V-2, B-25, TO-1 (Navy version F-80), F2G-2, F9F-2, XNQ-1, P4M-1, HPP-2, F4U-5/5N, PBV-6A, P4Y-2, R4D-8, XF4U-5, SA-16 Albatross, HTK-1, HRS-1, HO5S-1, HUP-2, JRF-5, F80-C, F-86A, HTL, XP2V-2, UF-1, F3D-2/2T, F2H-2/3/4B, AD-4/4B/5/6, F7U-3, T-28/28B, T-34, S2F-1/2, HO4S-1, F9F-8/8T, HSS-1, F-101C, HSS-1, GR-21, TF-1, F3H-2M, F-11F-1F (Supertiger), F-101A, TA4D-1, F4D-1, A4D-1/2, F8U-1/1E/2/2N, R5D1/2/3/4, R7V-1, F-5, SH3A, UH-1B, F3D-2, TV-2, UC45J, T38A, CH-19E and 18 British aircraft Lincoln II 4 engine heavy bomber, Fairey Firefly (attack type), Sea Fury fighter, Vampire I & V jet fighter, Meteor III twin jet fighter, Tempest (mean fighter), Mosquito twin fighter, Anson utility aircraft, Oxford light twin transport, Harvard (British SNJ), Dominic twin light transport, Anson twin light transport, Seafire (Spitfire MKXX contra-prop), Auster (light cub-like tow plane), Olympia sail plane, DeHaviland Dove medium transport, Devon medium transport, and the R4D with British turbo-prop engines.

- (2) Sighted and reported location of Japanese fleet in Battle of the Coral Sea 4-12 May 1942.
- (3) Was one of few planes finally launched from buring and sinking USS *Lexington* to act as a fighter for what was expected to be a second air attack by Japanese forces. Second attack did not materialize and all planes were ordered to land on the USS *Yorktown*. Lost all possessions on *Lexington*. Arrived in San Diego with only a pair of cut-off khakis, no shoes and two dimes in my pocket. When I found out I had been promoted to LTJG, I took the two dimes, pounded them flat, cut them into strips and attached them to my collar.
- (4) Toward the end of the war, was assigned as CO of VF-19, a Grumman "Bearcat" fighter squadron aboard the carrier USS *Hornet* on its way to attack Japan. After Hiroshima was bombed, this fabulous airplane never saw combat action.
- (5) As CO, USS *Intrepid*, was primary recovery ship of Project Gemini - recovering astronauts Virgil (Gus) Grissom and John W. Young in the Western Atlantic, March 23, 1965.
- (6) While at Empire Test Pilots School, Farnborough, England, LCDR Joe Smith was awarded the McKenna Trophy as the best test pilot. Joe made history, for he was the first American to take away from the British Empire one of the few trophies that really mattered. (He was not actually allowed to take the Trophy away, but he got a mug for keeps).

Personal Data

Joe is married to the former Bertha B. Barker of Ogden, Utah. They met at the University of Utah and have been married for 58 years. They have three sons - Lincoln J. Smith, Cordell C. Smith, and Charles L. Smith.

Degrees Held

B.S. Mechanical Engineering, University of Utah - 1938
B.S. Aero Engineering - 1950
M.S. International Affairs, GWU - 1967