



**R. Larry Walker, Commander, USN (Ret.)**  
 “Larry”

Date of Designation: August 1943      NA # 9323

Jet # 21

Dates of Active Duty: 1942 - 1964

Total Flight Hours: 7,825

Carrier/Ship Landings: Fixed wing: 1,026

Approximate Flight Hours:

Jet: 3,065 Prop: 4,760 Helo: 65 VF/VA: 6,000

Combat Tours:

WW II: May 1944 - May 1945, Pacific, Philippines and Iwo Jima

Korea: Jan. 1950 - Aug. 1950

SEASIA: Jun. 1963 - Oct. 1963

Total missions (WW II, Korea, SEASIA) - 236 missions.

Aviation Commands:

OinC, Fleet Air Gunnery Unit (FAGU), El Centro, CA. CO, VA-56 (1959-60) - One of first Pacific Fleet squadrons to deploy A4 Skyhawk. Awarded the Navy “E”, Safety Award and won the all-Navy weapons meet at NAF Yuma, AZ.

Combat Awards:

3 Distinguished Flying Crosses

5 Air Medals

**Duty Assignment Chronology**

1942-1943 Navy flight training.  
 1943-1963 Fighter squadrons, WW II, Korea and South-east Asia.  
 1945-1947 Tactical Development Unit One (TDU-1).  
 1948-1948 Naval Test Pilot School (Class 1), Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River, MD.  
 1948-1950 Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River. Project pilot for first BIS jet programs.



1950-1950 Chief Test Pilot, Naval Ordnance Test Station, China Lake, CA.  
 1950-1954 OinC, Fleet Air Gunnery Unit, El Centro, CA. Started FAGU course which is now called “Top Gun”.  
 1956-1958 Operations Officer, USS *Saipan* (CVL-48).  
 1958-1959 Naval War College, Newport, RI. - Student.  
 1959-1960 CO, VA-56.  
 1960-1963 Naval Ordnance Test Station, China Lake, CA. Chief Test Pilot. Developed “EYE” series weapons in inventory now.  
 1963-196 COMNAVAIRPAC Staff, Air Wing Training.  
 1964 Retired from active Duty. Joined North American Aviation as Chief Test Conductor - Apollo.

**Summary of Significant Career Events**

- (1) Three combat tours during WW II, Korea and South-east Asia. Flew 236 combat missions with four air-to-air kills and accumulated 1,026 carrier landings.
- (2) Assigned to Tactical Development Unit ONE (TDU-1) where Navy’s fighter tactics were developed and standardized. These tactics were evaluated against captured enemy aircraft of that period. Operational Evaluation (OPVAL) of new aircraft destined for fleet introduction was also a function of TDU-1. I flew the carrier phase of these evaluations. Member of TDU-1 Flight Demonstration Team.
- (3) Was selected to attend the first class of the Naval Test Pilot School (NTPS) at NAS Patuxent River, MD. Following graduation, I was assigned as a project pilot in the BIS trials of the initial jet candidates for carrier based VF aircraft. Also participated in pressure breathing and ejection seat experimental investigation at the Naval Air Engineering Laboratory (NAEL) Philadelphia.

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Summary of Significant Career Events CONTINUED

- (4) I was jet pilot Number 21 and flew 62 different aircraft (US and foreign) during my service career.
- (5) Completed two tours of duty at the Naval Ordnance Test Station where as Chief Test Pilot, I was responsible for the initial firing of all new weapons in the R&D phase. Some of these weapons and weapon systems became operational and used in Operation Desert Storm. I received Letters of Commendation from both the Navy and Army during these tests.
- (6) The forerunner of "Top Gun" was the Fleet Air Gunnery Unit (FAGU). I was responsible for establishing this unit and guided its progress as OinC until it was later commissioned. Although a shoestring operation at the start, the mission and the results were similar to the present Top Gun. I had completed a tour with the USAF in F-86's prior to this assignment.
- (7) Attended the Naval War College and was assigned as Commanding Officer of Attack Squadron 56 (VA-56). During the time I commanded the squadron, we were awarded the Navy "E", Safety Award and won the all-Navy weapons meet.
- (8) Joined North American and later Northrop after retiring. Was the Chief test conductor of Apollo 12 at North American.