



**Ernie Christensen, Rear Admiral USN (Ret.)**  
"Ernie"

Date of Designation: March 1966

Dates of Active Duty: June 3, 1964 - June 1, 1997

Total Flight Hours: 5,200+

Carrier/Ship Landings: Fixed wing: 1,050 Rotary: 15-25

Approximate Flight Hours:

Jet: 5,200+ Prop: 40 VF/VA: 5,000+ VT: 130

Helo: 50

Combat Tours:

Vietnam: VA-113, USS *Enterprise*, Oct. 1966-Jul. 1967

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203 combat missions for the two *Enterprise* deployments.

Vietnam: VF-142, 1971-1973 (end of conflict).  
157 combat missions.

Desert Storm: CO, USS *Ranger* (CV-61), 16 Jan.-18 Apr. 1991

Total combat missions: 360

Commands:

VF-114, February 1980-May 1981

USNFWS (TOPGUN), December 1981-February 1983

CVW-2, August 1983-December 1984

USS *Kansas City*, (AOR3), February 1987-January 1989

USS *Ranger*, (CV61), February 1990-August 1991

COMFAIRCARIB September 1993-April 1995

COMTRALANT May 1995-June 1997

Combat Awards/Flight Performance Awards:

Defense Superior Service Medal

2 Legions of Merit

3 Distinguished Flying Cross Medals

27 Air Medals

7 Navy Commendation Medals, 4 w Combat V

Meritorious Service Medal

Bronze Star



### Duty Assignment Chronology

1960-1964 U. S. Naval Academy, Midshipman.  
 1964-1966 Navy Flight Training  
 1966-1968 VA-113.  
 1968-1970 Blue Angels.  
 1971-1973 VF-142.  
 1974-1975 Naval War College.  
 1975-1977 VF-121.  
 1978-1980 VF-114.  
 1981 COMFITAEEWINGPAC Operations Officer.  
 1981-1983 CO, TOPGUN.  
 1983-1984 COMCVW-2.  
 1985-1986 Office of Program Appraisal.  
 1987-1989 CO, USS *Kansas City* (AOR3).  
 7th Flt Operations Officer.  
 1990-1991 CO, USS *Ranger* (CV61)  
 1991-1992 CJCS STOD  
 1992-1993 CJCS NMCS  
 1993-1995 COMFAIRCARIB  
 1995-1997 COMTRALANT

### Summary of Significant Career Events

- (1) First 3rd Generation Naval Aviator. Grandfather Rasmus, Aviator #1885 (1918). First Atlantic crossing. Father Radm Ernest Christensen earned wings in 1937. CO USS *Hornet* (CV12); CARDIV 18.
- (2) Two combat deployments - VA-113 on *Enterprise*. VA-113- first combat deployed A4F squadron. VA113 won Pacific Fleet E and Arleigh Burke Award for 1968.
- (3) Second USNA grad selected and first grad to complete full Blue Angel tour. Tour included F11 to F4J transition 1969-#3 ; 1970 #4. Flew back seat of world renowned US National aerobatic team pilot Art Scholl in his Super Chipmonk A/C during a full practice aerobatic demo. Slept much of the flight. Full length Feature Documentary film Threshold: The Blue Angel Experience filmed primarily during 1970 show season.

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Summary of Significant Career Events continued:

- (4) VF142- two combat deployments through end of Vietnam war. Spot promoted to LCDR in 1971. Air Wing 14 TOP Hook for 10 month 72-73 cruise. 570 *Enterprise* traps.
- (5) 1975-1977 F4 RAG (VF-121) Ops Officer. One of four Instructor pilots dual-hated as A4 adversary pilot. First Navy Adversary pilot to go through spin training at Pax River. 1977-Only fighter pilot of a team of 5 naval aviators led by an aviation flag officer as tasked by OPNAV for 10 day visit to Israel to evaluate and report on Israeli Air Force training methods and procedures
- (6) As XO of VF-114 (F14's), 1978-79 cruise included initial "line of Death" CAP sorties off Libya. CO VF-114 during 1980 CV66 transit of Suez Canal-first transit since 1967. Provided Fighter support off Iran during Iranian Hostage ops. One of F14 two crews to fly feasibility test for F14 cover for Desert One with 8 Hour Mirror image sorties.
- (7) As CO TOPGUN, wrote and pushed Ops. Requirement (MNS) thru Navy for 4th generation adversary; pushed through Aviation Qualification Designators for TOPGUN Grads; pushed through Echelon 2 status for TOPGUN. Convened first Adversary-only Class. Set up Adversary Standardization criteria. First TOPGUN pilot to fly F16 for Adversary Evaluation. 1982, magazine freelance writer Ehud Yoney spent two weeks interviewing and writing article for California Magazine. When published, article inspired producers Bruckheimer and Simpson to hire two screenwriters to write movie "TOPGUN."
- (8) COMCVW2 aboard USS *Kitty Hawk* in North Arabian Sea after CIA Station Chief Buckley's capture and execution in Iran. Developed first "Pass-Down" Strike Plans for relieving Air Wings. Air Wing 2 was accident free during tour.
- (9) Acting Director OPA, was action officer for reinstating NAVCAD and instituting Aviation Duty Officer Programs for Naval aviation. 1985 - sent by SecNav to get qual'ed and current in F-18A at Pax River and evaluate it as replacement for Blue Angel A4's.
- (10) As CO, USS *Kansas City* 1987, early deployed with USS *Missouri* SAG. Participated in Operation Earnest Will in North Arabian Sea. Provided support to Operation Nimble Archer. Two Iranian oil platforms were destroyed during this Operation.
- (11) As 7th Fleet Operations Officer, was part of first US ship visit since 1947 to China (Shanghai). Visit occurred during demonstrations that ended coincidentally the day tanks rolled into Tiananmen Square.
- (12) Commanded USS *Ranger* (CV61) in the Persian Gulf throughout Operation Desert Storm in Persian Gulf, 16 January 1991-18 April 1991. 4,300 combat sorties in 43 days. Only Carrier to remain in Theater of Operations following ODS. Ship awarded the Battle Efficiency E for the Pacific Fleet for Calendar Year 1991.
- (13) Lead Investigating Officer for six major aviation accident investigations; four aircraft; two aircraft carrier investigations. One cited as best ever seen by Chief Naval Safety Center /VCNO - taught as model for years at Naval Safety School.