

The Diamond Anniversary Decade

1981–1990

The eighth decade of Naval Aviation was characterized by a buildup of its forces, the rise of world-wide acts of terrorism and Naval Aviation's involvement in response to the various crises throughout the world.

The decade began with American Embassy personnel being held as hostages in Iran. As had been the case since the Cold War began, carriers were on station in response to the crisis. The latter part of the 1970s had seen an increase in the number of carrier deployments to the Indian Ocean. In the 1980s that trend was increased and strengthened. Undoubtedly, this was the result of the ongoing and increasing problems in the Middle East, eastern Africa and the sub-continent of Asia.

During the 1980s, Naval Aviation saw a resurgence in its strength and capabilities. There was an increase in its building programs and new technology research. Many of Naval Aviation's aircraft for the 1990s and the 21st century were introduced in the 1980s. They included the F/A-18 Hornet, the SH-60B LAMPS MK III Seahawk and its derivatives, the MH-53E and the AV-8B Harrier II. A new aircraft concept was introduced with the rollout of the V-22 Osprey, a fixed-wing, tilt-rotor aircraft capable of vertical take-off and landing and horizontal flight (VTOL). Missile development kept pace with the aircraft. New introductions into the operating inventory included the HARM, Skipper, Hellfire and the cruise missile (Tomahawk). The platforms for these missiles also kept pace with developments. Additional nuclear-powered aircraft carriers were commissioned and more were authorized for construction. A new class of multipurpose amphibious assault ship (LHD) was commissioned with more scheduled for completion or under construction.

The decade of the 1980s was special for Naval Aviation. In 1986 it celebrated its 75th anniversary. Throughout the year, many of the advances in the development of Naval Aviation were lauded, as were the men and women who contributed to its growth. Naval Aviation's continued involvement in international events was emphasized and its need to maintain its readiness and capabilities was reaffirmed.

Naval Aviation's involvement in international events—major highlights of the 1980s—began with Iran and the continuing hostage crisis, 1979–1981. Libyan operations in 1981, 1986 and 1989 demonstrated Naval Aviation's air-to-air and strike capabilities. In 1983, a carrier and amphibious task force took part in Operation Urgent Fury and the re-establishment of democracy in the Caribbean island of Grenada. Operations in and around Lebanon kept Naval Aviation occupied during the mid-1980s. Responding to hijacking and terrorism in the Mediterranean basin was an ongoing requirement for most of the 1980s. The other hot spot for Naval Aviation was the Persian Gulf and the Iran-Iraq war. Naval Aviation was involved in numerous periods of short-lived combat operations in the Persian Gulf area. The escorting of reflagged oil tankers and the monitoring of the Iran-Iraq war kept Naval Aviation on the line from the mid-1980s. As the decade ended, a new crisis appeared when Iraq invaded Kuwait and the UN imposed an economic blockade on Iraq to force its withdrawal from Kuwait.

The activities of Naval Aviation were not limited to a combat role. In 1982, the U.S. Navy began working closely with U.S. Customs and the Coast Guard to curb the influx of drugs into the country. Navy E-2C Hawkeye aircraft became a permanent participant in helping to detect drug smugglers. Other activities included continued involvement in the manned space program and assistance during natural disasters, both at home and abroad.

The 1980s ended on a high note, featuring a continued détente between the U.S. and the Soviet Union. During this decade, Naval Aviation continued to show its diversity and multiple capabilities.

1981

1 January The names of the first group of selectees for the new Naval Aviation Hall of Honor at the Naval Aviation Museum in Pensacola, Fla., were made public. The 12 men approved for enshrinement by the Chief of Naval Operations on 10 July 1980 were:

1981—Continued

Admiral John H. Towers; Eugene B. Ely; Lieutenant Colonel Alfred A. Cunningham; Rear Admiral Richard E. Byrd, Jr.; Commander Theodore G. Ellyson; Glenn H. Curtiss; Vice Admiral Patrick N. L. Bellinger; Rear Admiral William A. Moffett; Rear Admiral Albert C. Read; Lieutenant Commander Godfrey deC. Chevalier; Captain Holden C. Richardson; and Warrant Officer Floyd Bennett.

6 January The LAMPS MK III ASW system went to sea for the first time. Off the northeastern coast of Florida, the SH-60B Seahawk landed aboard *McInerney* (FFG 8) underway by using the new RAST gear. RAST was designed to recover a helicopter in seas with ship movements up to a 28 degree roll, 5 degrees of pitch and heaving of 15 feet per second. The primary mission of the SH-60B was antisubmarine warfare. It also provided surveillance and targeting information on surface vessels, performed search and rescue (SAR) operations and was used for vertical replenishment and gunfire support.

10 January Aircraft from the naval stations at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and Roosevelt Roads, P.R., responded to a request by the Jamaican government for assistance in fighting a fuel oil storage tank fire in the Montego Bay area. The aircraft flew in fire fighters, equipment and light water.

15 January A Tomahawk cruise missile was launched from the submerged submarine *Guitarro* (SSN 665) off the California coast and impacted the target at a range of more than 100 miles. The test was repeated six days later with the same results. In another test conducted on 20 March, the missile hit the target at a range of more than 200 miles. These tests successfully demonstrated the Tomahawk's capability to search for, locate and attack a target at sea.

20 January Iran released 52 Americans who had been held hostage since 4 November 1979, when the American Embassy in Tehran was seized. Twelve members of the hostage group were active duty Navy and Marine Corps personnel. Commander Don A. Sharer was the only member of the group from the Naval Aviation community. A Naval Flight Officer, he was a naval advisor at the time of the embassy takeover and the senior member of the Navy and Marine Corps hostages.

31 January The era of Enlisted Naval Aviators came to a close when the last enlisted pilot, Master Chief Robert K. Jones, retired after 38 years of naval service. Enlisted pilots had performed their duties for over 61 years as Naval Aviators on combat missions, as transport pilots and as instructors. The program for Enlisted Naval Aviators officially ended in 1947.



Master Chief Air Controlman Robert K. Jones (right foreground) conducts a pre-flight check of a US-2B Tracker.

1981—Continued

19 February VFA-125 became the first squadron to receive the new F/A-18 Hornet for fleet operations. The Hornet was the Navy's newest strike fighter and had been undergoing extensive operational test and evaluation at Patuxent River, Md., and by VX-4 at Point Mugu, Calif. VFA-125's mission was to train maintenance personnel and pilots for future Hornet squadrons.

16 March An A-6 Intruder from VA-115 on board *Midway* sighted a downed civilian helicopter in the South China Sea. *Midway* immediately dispatched HC-1 Det 2 helicopters to the scene. All 17 people aboard the downed helicopter were rescued and brought aboard the carrier. The chartered civilian helicopter was also plucked out of the water and lifted to *Midway's* flight deck.

23 March The F/A-18 Hornet began climatic testing by the Air Force's 3246th Test Wing at the McKinley Climatic Laboratory, Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. The tests were designed to evaluate the F/A-18 airframe's ability to withstand the wide range of temperatures and climatic conditions which the aircraft would experience in its everyday operations.



The F/A-18 Hornet during climatic testing at Eglin AFB, Fla.

12 April Space Shuttle *Columbia* was launched at Cape Canaveral, Fla. The first reusable space vehicle was manned by an all-Navy crew consisting of Naval Aviators Captain John Young, USN (Ret), and Captain Robert Crippen. Two days later, after 36 orbits around the earth, the shuttle returned to earth and touched down safely at Edwards Air Force Base, Calif. The vehicle was then prepared for its next flight into space. The space orbiter was designed to carry satellite payloads into space and conduct manned experiments.

13 April AV-8A Harriers were deployed as a Marine Air Group aboard an LHA for the first time. Marine Air Group 32, composed of VMA-231 and -542, began its Sixth Fleet deployment aboard *Nassau*.

15 April Admiral John S. Thach, one of the Navy's early fighter tacticians, died. He was commanding officer of VF-3 when World War II began and was perhaps best known for developing a two-plane fighter tactic which proved to be effective against the highly maneuverable Japanese Zero. This innovation became known as the "Thach Weave" and was taught to Navy and Army Air Force pilots alike.

4 May *America* transited the Suez Canal, the largest warship ever to do so. She was the first U.S. carrier to travel through the canal since 1 June 1967, when *Intrepid* navigated the waterway.

19 May Astronauts Captain John W. Young, USN (Ret), and Captain Robert L. Crippen, USN, were presented medals by the President at White House ceremonies for their successful mission on the first orbital flight of the Space Shuttle *Columbia*. Astronaut Young received the congressional Space Medal of Honor, the seventh person so honored. Five of the seven have been Navy or Marine Corps Aviators.

20 May TACGRU One and subordinate commands, TACRONS 11 and 12, were established. Their mission was to perform all functions relating to tactical control of aircraft in support of amphibious operations.

1981—Continued



Space Shuttle Columbia, with its all Navy crew, touches down at Edwards AFB, Calif., after its first flight.

26 May During night air operations on *Nimitz*, an EA-6B Prowler from VMAQ-2 crash landed on the flight deck and careened into parked aircraft on the bow. Fourteen men lost their lives. The men of *Nimitz* and CVW-8 prevented further loss of life and damage to the carrier by prompt rescue, damage control and fire prevention operations. On 30 June, *Nimitz* returned to operations at sea after two days in port in Norfolk to repair the damage incurred as a result of the 26 May crash.

1 June Patrol Wing 10 was established in ceremonies held at NAS Moffett Field, Calif. The operational patrol wing would act as the middle link between the patrol squadrons and Commander, Patrol Wings, Pacific. This was the third time that the Patrol Wing 10 designation had been used. It was originally established in December 1940, disestablished in June 1947, established in June 1963 and disestablished once more in 1973. In early 1942, PBV squadrons of the patrol wing fought courageous delaying actions against the Japanese as Allied forces were driven southward from the Philippines. Later in the war, the legendary Black Cats operated under Patrol Wing 10.

6 June The Order of Daedalians presented their Weapon System Award for Outstanding System Achievement to NAVAIR. The specific system which occasioned the award was NAVAIR's A-6E TRAM project.

15 June The Blue Angels, the Navy's Flight Demonstration Squadron, celebrated their 35th anniversary. Since its beginning, the squadron had flown the F8F Bearcat, F6F Hellcat, F9F Panther, F9F-5 Cougar, F11F-1 Tiger, F-4J Phantom II, and the A-4 Skyhawk.

16 June The first fleet operational CH-53E Super Stallion helicopter, built by Sikorsky Aircraft Division, was delivered to Marine Air Group 26 for assignment to HMH-464. The newly improved CH-53E, the western world's largest helicopter, could transport cargo of over 16 tons or ferry 55 fully equipped Marines. It was also capable of delivering aircraft on board carriers.

29 June The Secretary of Defense approved full production of the F/A-18 Hornet. The aircraft had met all requirements for use as a Navy and Marine Corps fighter and would replace the aging F-4 Phantom II.

1 July VS-0294 was established at NAS North Island, Calif. The reserve unit's mission would be to train and qualify pilots, NFOs, aircrewmembers and maintenance personnel to augment fleet carrier ASW squadrons. The reserve squadron, with the exception of maintenance personnel, would train on simulators or trainers, which were realistic mock-ups of S-3A aircraft, thereby reducing the high cost of utilizing actual aircraft.

1981—Continued

7 July A strike by the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization led the President to assign 116 Navy and Marine Corps air traffic controllers to civilian airport towers.

8 July A newly modified model 24 Lear jet arrived at NAS Patuxent River, Md., to be used as part of the Naval Test Pilot School's fleet of flying teaching aids. The Lear jet was equipped with a flight control system which allowed changes in the aircraft's flying qualities to meet instructional needs. Test pilot students could be exposed to handling characteristics ranging from a transport to the F/A-18 in this aircraft.

9 July U.S. Naval Aviation officials and representatives from the Federal German Navy Air Arm marked the 25th anniversary of the program established in 1956 for the training of German naval pilots, flight officers and flight surgeons at U.S. Naval Aviation facilities. The ceremonies were conducted at NAS Pensacola, Fla., and included the Chief of Naval Air Training and the Deputy Commander-in-Chief German Fleet.

23 July VMFA-312 received a camouflaged F-4S Phantom II sporting a new paint scheme which was being tested by NAVAIR. The new camouflage was a scientifically designed, counter-shaded gray, tactical paint scheme to help the plane to escape visual detection.

19 August Two F-14 Tomcats of VF-41 shot down two Libyan Su-22 Sukhoi aircraft over international waters. Flying off *Nimitz*, the Tomcats were on a reconnaissance mission for a missile-firing exercise being conducted by U.S. ships from two carrier battle groups when they were fired on by the Libyan planes. The VF-41 Tomcats, part of CVW-8, were piloted by Commander Henry M. Kleeman and Lieutenant Lawrence M. Muczynski with the respective RIOs Lieutenants David J. Venlet and James Anderson.

28 September The first night flight of a conventional land attack Tomahawk cruise missile was conducted over White Sands Missile Range, N.Mex. A Navy A-6 equipped with the Tomahawk cruise missile took off from the Pacific Missile Test Center, Point Mugu, Calif., and flew to White Sands. The aircraft used the Tomahawk's terrain contour matching updates to guide it to the range. Once inside the range, the missile was launched from the A-6 and flew a complex night land attack mission.

5 October The AGM-88A HARM missile made its first live warhead launch. The missile was fired from

an A-7E against *Savage* (DER 368). The test was conducted from the Pacific Missile Test Center.

14 October The Naval Aviation Hall of Honor was dedicated at the Naval Aviation Museum, Pensacola, Fla. The first 12 selectees were enshrined during the dedication.

28 October Walter Hinton, the last surviving participant in the historic NC-4 flight, died. The flight, made in May 1919, was the world's first trans-Atlantic flight.

31 October Newport News Shipbuilding, Newport News, Va., laid the keel for CVN 71, and the name for the new carrier was announced officially as *Theodore Roosevelt*. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger delivered the address during a ceremony at Newport News, Va.

5 November The McDonnell Douglas AV-8B Harrier flew for the first time. The AV-8B, developed by McDonnell Aircraft Company with British Aerospace participation, was an advanced version of the AV-8A already in service with the Marine Corps.

7 November VMAQ-4 was established at NAS Whidbey Island, Wash. The squadron was the first Marine Corps reserve squadron to fly the EA-6A Intruder.

13 November The Secretary of the Navy announced the forthcoming retirement of Admiral Hyman G. Rickover, Director of the Division of Naval Reactors. Admiral Rickover was known as the father of the nuclear-powered submarine and was also responsible for the development of nuclear-powered surface ships, including aircraft carriers. Admiral Rickover's contributions to Naval Aviation had been duly recognized on 21 July 1970, when he was awarded honorary Naval Aviator wings.

14 November Astronauts Captain Richard H. Truly, USN, and Colonel Joe H. Engle, USAF, brought Space Shuttle *Columbia* back to earth after two days in space. They were the first men to fly into space and return in a previously used spacecraft. *Columbia* had its maiden voyage in April 1981.

17 November The first firing of the Harpoon Block 1B missile occurred aboard *Fletcher* (DD 992). This successful launch was a milestone in missile development by NAVAIR. The air-launched version of the Harpoon made its initial carrier deployment in October 1981 with VA-65 aboard *Constellation*.

1981—Continued

2 December Captain Cecil E. Harris, USN (Ret), died. He was the Navy's second highest scoring ace during World War II and was credited with downing 24 enemy aircraft.

1982

8 January The F/A-18 Hornet made its first fully automatic landing on a simulated carrier deck field at Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River, Md.

28 January The new Limited Duty Officer Aviator Program, in which enlisted personnel could receive flight training and be commissioned, was inaugurated by Antisubmarine Warfare Aircrewman First Class Michael A. Gray and Chief Yeoman Douglas L. McGowan, Jr., when they completed their flight training and received their wings and commission. This was the first time that noncommissioned officers completed flight training since the NAVCAD program ended in 1968.

3 February *John F. Kennedy* transited the Suez Canal from the Mediterranean Sea to the Red Sea, the largest warship ever to pass through the Canal. She was en route to the Indian Ocean for an extended deployment.

13 February VF-84, stationed aboard *Nimitz*, returned to Norfolk from the Mediterranean, completing the first operational deployment of the TARPS on the F-14 Tomcat. TARPS was designed to be carried by the F-14 for low to medium altitude photoreconnaissance missions.

5 March The Navy assumed command of the government plant representative office at McDonnell Douglas Corporation's St. Louis, Mo., facilities. The Navy replaced the Air Force plant representative office which had been responsible for contract administration at the McDonnell Douglas plant for the past 11 years.

16 March The Vice President announced the U.S. Navy would be actively working with U.S. Customs officials and the U.S. Coast Guard to curb the influx of drugs into the United States. The Navy's E-2C Hawkeye aircraft became a permanent participant in helping detect drug smugglers.

18 April 40th anniversary of the Doolittle raid on Tokyo. The event was celebrated on 14 April with a flyover of Washington, D.C., by four rebuilt B-25 aircraft. General Doolittle, USAF (Ret), was on hand to greet the pilots after the flyover. During the Tokyo raid in 1942, B-25s had been launched from the carrier *Hornet*.

22 May Marine Corps Aviation celebrated its 70th anniversary, marking the day when 1st Lieutenant Alfred A. Cunningham, USMC, reported to the Superintendent of the Naval Academy for "duty in connection with aviation."

2 June The AV-8B Harrier II made the first flight of its Navy Preliminary Evaluation. This advanced version of the AV-8 was designed to have twice the performance of its predecessor.

7 June The Navy received an advanced version of the Harpoon missile called the Block 1B Harpoon. The new missile had an improved radar-guidance system and was capable of flying at lower altitudes than the initial Harpoons, which were delivered to the fleet starting in 1977. The new capability reduced the risk of detection by defense radar. The Harpoon was programmed to be the Navy's basic antiship weapon for the rest of this century.

25 June The history of the Navy's C-121 (previous designations include PO, WV, R7O and R7V) ended after 33 years of service when the last Warning Star (other popular names were Constellation, Super Constellation and Super Connie) was retired from active service with VAQ-33. The Constellation began its naval career in August 1949 and served in a wide variety of roles and missions during its active duty with the Navy.

25 June The greatest concentration of U.S. Navy air power in the Mediterranean Sea was the result of the battle groups of *Forrestal* and *Independence* joining forces with *Dwight D. Eisenhower* and *John F. Kennedy* during the latter part of June. After steaming together in the eastern Mediterranean Sea for several days, *Forrestal* and *Independence* relieved *Dwight D. Eisenhower* and *John F. Kennedy*, the latter sailing home to Norfolk, Va., after a long deployment.

30 June The last active duty photographic squadron (VFP-63) was disestablished. VFP-63's disestablishment also brought to a close the era of the F-8 Crusader squadrons on active duty in the Navy. The only F-8 and photographic squadrons still left in existence were reserve squadrons VFP-206 and VFP-306, NAF Washington, D.C.

30 June Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Thomas B. Hayward, the Navy's number one aviator, retired. Admiral Hayward, the 21st CNO, assumed the position on 1 July 1978. He was a graduate of the Naval Academy, Class of 1944, and was designated a Naval Aviator on 26 July 1950.

1982—Continued

7 July In a change of command ceremony, Mr. Walter Wagner became the Naval Air Systems Command's first civilian project manager. Mr. Wagner relieved Captain John E. Hock, Jr., as project manager for the E-2/C-2 airborne tactical data system.

13 July Lieutenant Commander Barbara Allen Rainey, the first woman to be designated a Naval Aviator, was killed in an aircraft accident during a training flight. She was an instructor with VT-3 when the accident occurred.



Barbara Allen in the early days of her career.

30 July Ensign Jannine Weiss became the first enlisted woman to receive her wings and commission under the new Limited Duty Officer Aviator Program.

31 July The last Guided Missile Unit was disestablished after 29 years of service. GMU-41 was established on 11 May 1953, with a varied mission. It provided missile training and technical support to ships and squadrons, and supported units involved in test and evaluation of missiles and associated equipment in the fleet environment.

2 August The XV-15, Bell Helicopter's experimental vertical lift aircraft, piloted by Navy test pilot Lieutenant Commander John Ball and Bell's test pilot Dorman Cannon, conducted its first at-sea shipboard landings and takeoffs on *Tripoli*. A tilt-rotor aircraft, the XV-15 had a conventional fixed wing, with engines and rotors mounted on the wingtips, which were capable of swiveling to provide either vertical or horizontal flight.

5 August The Naval Air Test Center successfully completed tests on the first aircraft tire made entirely of guayule natural rubber. The Goodyear tire was mounted on the right main landing gear of an F-4J Phantom II and subjected to a series of maximum gross weight takeoffs and landings. Maximum weight for the test aircraft was 56,000 pounds.

8 August The Chief of Naval Operations established the first NAVPRO outside the U.S. in Melbourne, Australia. The new NAVPRO's duty would be to administer U.S. contracts with Australian companies that were involved in building the F/A-18 for the Royal Australian Air Force.

24 September Naval Air Systems Command awarded to McDonnell Douglas, teamed with British Aerospace and Sperry, a pre-full-scale development contract for the VTXTS. The VTXTS was designed around the British Aerospace Hawk with appropriate simulators, academics, a training management system, and support equipment.

30 September Acting as executive agent for a tri-service program, NAVAIR signed a \$400,000 contract with the Gila River Indian Community of Sacaton, Ariz., to research, develop and establish a prototype domestic guayule rubber industry in the United States. If successful, this industry would reduce U.S. depen-

1982—Continued

dence on supplies of 100-percent imported natural rubber. Potential military applications for guayule rubber were aircraft tires, jet engine mounts, hydrophone arrays, truck tires, tank treads, submarine acoustic tiles and medical supplies.

1 October Master Chief Avionics Technician Billy C. Sanders assumed the duties of Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy. He was the second person with an aviation background to hold the position since it was established on 1 March 1967. Master Chief Thomas S. Crow, who preceded Sanders, was the first.

1 October Helicopter Tactical Wing One was established at NAS Norfolk, Va. The new wing consisted of HC-6, HC-16, HM-12, HM-14 and HM-16. It was responsible for the administrative and operational activities of these helicopter squadrons with regard to training, material support and overall readiness. Captain John W. Osberg was its first commander.

7 October ARAPAHO at-sea testing was completed at the Norfolk International Terminal, Norfolk, Va., when the 18,000-ton container ship Export Leader—configured with a portable modular aviation facility—returned to port after having logged 178 day and 45 night helicopter landings. ARAPAHO was a research and development project to demonstrate the feasibility of equipping merchant ships with emergency aviation support in wartime and of operating ASW helicopters and other combatant aircraft from these vessels.

16 October *Saratoga* conducted her first sea trials since entering the shipyard as the first carrier to undergo SLEP. She was completing the final phase of the modernization and overhaul program.

28 October The 30th anniversary of the first flight of the A-3 Skywarrior, affectionately known as the Whale. The aircraft had been in the fleet since 1956 and had been used as a heavy bomber, radar trainer, electronics reconnaissance platform, tanker, tanker-electronics jammer, photoreconnaissance platform, dedicated electronics jammer, airborne weapons test bed and VIP transport.

11 November The first operational flight of the Space Shuttle *Columbia* was launched with astronauts Vance D. Brand, Robert F. Overmyer, William B. Lenoir and Joe P. Allen aboard. Astronauts Brand and Overmyer were former Navy and Marine Corps aviators, respectively. Lenoir and Allen were civilians. This was the first time four astronauts were aboard the shut-

tle for a flight. Previous test flights conducted by the Space Shuttle *Columbia* carried only two astronauts.

15 December *Naval Aviation News* celebrated its 65th year of publication. The Navy's oldest periodical in continuous print and one of the oldest aviation magazines in the country, the magazine originally began as a weekly bulletin published by the Chief of Naval Operations.

1983

7 January The first F/A-18 Hornets entered operational service (excluding operational training squadrons) with the Black Knights of VMFA-314, replacing the F-4 Phantom II. This transition marked the beginning of the replacement of F-4 and A-7 aircraft with the Hornet.

21 January HSL-41 was established with Commander Michael B. O'Connor Jr., as the Seahawks' first commanding officer. The squadron would be flying the new Sikorsky SH-60B Seahawk and, as the LAMPS MK III fleet readiness squadron, would train pilots, aircrew and maintenance personnel for SH-60B fleet squadrons.

11 March The first fleet CH-53E Super Stallion was delivered to the HM-12 Sea Dragons. The CH-53E could transport heavier loads over longer distances than previous helicopters used for logistics in the fleet.



The new heavy lift CH-53E Super Stallion in flight.

1983—Continued

Modifications included the addition of a third engine, a larger main rotor system and changes to the tail rotor. These changes would allow the CH-53E to carry three times the payload of its predecessor, the RH-53D.

21 March Carrier aviation experienced another first when an all-female flight crew from VRC-30 Truckin' Traders conducted an operational mission in a C-1A Trader that terminated in a carrier arrested landing aboard *Ranger*. The aircraft was commanded by Lieutenant Elizabeth M. Toedt and the crew included Lieutenant (jg) Cheryl A. Martin, AD3 Gina Greterman and ADAN Robin Banks.

25 March Fighter Attack Squadrons were redesignated Strike Fighter Squadrons. They would be flying the F/A-18 Hornet. The VFA designation used for the Fighter Attack Squadrons remained the same for the Strike Fighter Squadrons.

1 April Naval Air Reserve Units (NARU) were redesignated Naval Air Reserve (NAR): NAR Alameda, Calif., NAR Jacksonville, Fla., NAR Memphis, Tenn., NAR Norfolk, Va., NAR Whidbey Island, Wash., NAR Point Mugu, Calif., and NAR North Island, Calif.

7 April VF-201 and -202, Naval Reserve fighter squadrons, participated in National Week '83 exercises. This was the first time that tactical air reserve units conducted joint operations with the Sixth Fleet. The two squadrons with their F-4N Phantom IIs deployed from NAS Dallas, Tex., to NAS Sigonella, Sicily, via NAS Oceana, Va.; Gander, Newfoundland; Lajes, Azores; and Rota, Spain.

1 May RVAW-110 and -120 were redesignated VAW-110 and -120. Responsible for training personnel in early warning services for future assignment to fleet units, the VAW-110 Greyhawks were based at Norfolk, Va., and the VAW-120 Firebirds at NAS Miramar, Calif.

2 May Lieutenant Leslie E. Provow, a Naval Aviator assigned to VRC-40, the Codfish Airlines, became the first woman to be designated a Landing Signal Officer.

6 May HC-4 was established, permanently based at NAS Sigonella, Sicily, and flying the CH-53E Super Stallion. Its mission was to provide vertical on-board delivery (VOD) for the Sixth Fleet.

23 May The Navy's EX-50 Advanced Lightweight Torpedo made its first launch from a tactical aircraft, the S-3A Viking, at NATC Patuxent River, Md.

10 June Lieutenant Colleen Nevius became the first woman Naval Aviator to graduate from the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School at Patuxent River, Md., and be designated a Navy Test Pilot.



Lieutenant Colleen Nevius.

23 June The British-built airship, Skyship 500, arrived at NATC Patuxent River, Md., for test and evaluation. The Navy and Coast Guard were interested in the airship for possible maritime patrol, search and rescue and geo-survey missions.

1 July A new alignment of NAVAIR headquarters was implemented. The position of Deputy Commander was established. It was headed by a civilian, Dr. Angelo J. DiMascio. The realignment was designed to provide a corporate management perspective enabling NAVAIR to operate more efficiently.

6 July A Marine Corps CH-53E Super Stallion flew coast to coast in a 15-hour flight from Patuxent River, Md., to MCAS Tustin, Calif. It was refueled four times by a Marine Corps KC-130 Hercules.

23 July The U.S. Navy's only World War I ace, David S. Ingalls, was enshrined in the National Aviation Hall of Fame in Dayton, Ohio. Mr. Ingalls was honored for his service in World War I, in World War II in the Naval Air Transport Service and in his postwar role in commercial aviation.

1983—Continued

1 August A Marine Corps OV-10A Bronco landed on *Nassau* flight deck. This was the first time a Bronco had ever landed on an LHA. The recovery opened up the possibility of a future role for the OV-10A in amphibious operations.

25 August The Navy Department accepted the production prototype of the P-3C Orion Update III. The aircraft was flown to NATC Patuxent River, Md., for test and evaluation by VX-1. It was expected to be twice as effective in submarine detection as the Update II because it would provide increased effectiveness in the acoustic processing system.

29 August The first flight of the AV-8B Harrier II production model was conducted at the McDonnell Douglas plant in St. Louis, Mo.

30 August Lieutenant Commander Dale A. Gardner was a crew member aboard the Space Shuttle *Challenger*, becoming the first Naval Flight Officer (NFO) in space.

1 September The MH-53E Super Stallion production prototype made its first flight. The MH version of the CH-53E heavy-lift helicopter was developed to meet the Navy's needs for airborne mine countermeasures missions. The MH versions would also augment the VOD requirements of the Navy.

20 September The first launch of the Navy's AGM-65F IR Maverick missile took place. It was launched from an A-7E Corsair II and made a direct hit on a destroyer target. The AGM-65F was the latest addition to the Maverick family of air-to-ground missiles and was designed to enhance the Navy's antiship capabilities.

26 September The first takeoffs of an F/A-18 Hornet from a ski-jump ramp were conducted at NAS Patuxent River, Md. The tests were part of an evaluation of conventional jet aircraft using an upward curved ramp to shorten takeoff roll.

28 September The Seahawks of HSL-41 received their first production SH-60B. HSL-41 was the Navy's first LAMPS MK III squadron.

1 October A reorganization of Commander, Naval Reserve Force (formerly Chief of Naval Reserve) included a change in which Commander, Naval Air Reserve Force reported to Commander, Naval Reserve Force instead of to the Chief of Naval Operations. The restructuring was designed to improve command and control of the Naval Reserve Force and enhance combat readiness.

1 October The new Naval Space Command was established, with former astronaut Captain Richard H. Truly as its first commander. The new command con-



An AV-8B Harrier II full-scale development model undergoing heavy load tests prior to the first flight of the production model.

1983—Continued

solidated the Navy's present space-related activities under one organization. Elements that were placed under the new command included the Naval Space Surveillance System, Naval Astronautics Group and activities supporting the Fleet Satellite Communications System.

3 October Ensign Don E. Slone received his Wings of Gold as a Naval Flight Officer, becoming the first former enlisted man to complete the Enlisted Commissioning Program and the Aviation Officers Candidate School.

25 October Combat amphibious assault operations on Grenada were supported by aircraft from CVW-6 aboard *Independence*. Surveillance operations were provided by patrol squadrons and support operations by several reserve VR units.

23 November A modified CH-46 lifted off Boeing Vertol's flight ramp at Philadelphia, Pa., for its first flight. The modified CH-46 carried improvements that, when incorporated in all the H-46s, would extend the service life of the Navy/Marine Corps fleet of H-46 aircraft through the 1990s.

4 December In a strike against Syrian positions in Lebanon by CVW-6 and CVW-3 aircraft, two aircraft (an A-7 Corsair II and an A-6 Intruder) were lost to antiaircraft fire. This was the first loss of Navy fixed-wing aircraft in combat since the end of the Vietnam conflict in January 1973.

27 December The Secretary of the Navy announced the assignment of the name *Wasp* to LHD 1. The LHD 1 was the first of a new class of amphibious assault ships designed to accommodate new air-cushioned landing craft, as well as conventional landing craft, the AV-8 Harrier and all types of helicopters.

1984

4 January Lieutenant Robert O. Goodman, an NFO from VA-85 deployed aboard *John F. Kennedy*, returned to the U.S. after being held as a POW for a month in Syria. His A-6E had been shot down on 4 December 1983, while participating in a retaliatory strike in Lebanon.

10 January HC-1 received its first two CH-53E helicopters. Capable of lifting over 16 tons, the Super Stallion was the largest and most powerful helicopter in the western world. HC-1 was the only Navy West

Coast squadron to fly the CH-53E. The squadron would also continue to fly the SH-3G Sea Knight in its current role.

12 January The first AV-8B Harrier was received at MCAS Cherry Point, N.C., by VMAT-203. With over 25 percent of the structural weight composed of carbon epoxy composite material, the AV-8B offered twice the payload and radius of the AV-8A.

3 February Space Shuttle *Challenger* flew with a crew of Naval Aviators. The spacecraft commander, Vance D. Brand, was a Marine Corps aviator for five years. The two Navy members were Captain Bruce McCandless II and Commander Robert L. Gibson.

13 February The last instructional flight of the T-28 Trojan was flown by Ensign Michael Lee Gierhart of VT-27, ending the aircraft's 31-year career of training Naval Aviators.



Lieutenant Robert O. Goodman at a press conference following his return from captivity in Syria.

1984—Continued

12 March A Beech Aircraft AQM-37 variant target was flown to Mach 4.2 (2,775 mph) at 102,000 feet at the Navy's Pacific Missile Test Center, Point Mugu, Calif.

12 March ComPatWingsPac, Commodore Daniel J. Wolkensdorfer presented the Air Force Commendation Medal to VP-40 for the squadron's participation in the search for survivors of Korean Air Lines flight 007, shot down by a Soviet SU-17 Flagon interceptor. VP-40, during the midst of its deployment to northern Japan, provided P-3 Orions which served as the primary search platform, while the USAF maintained operational control of the effort.

14 March The last T-28 in the Training Command, BuNo 137796, departed for Naval District Washington to be displayed permanently at NS Anacostia, D.C.

20 March Lieutenant Catherine H. Osman was the first female pilot to land a helicopter (HH-46A) aboard the battleship *Iowa* (BB 61).

26 April The first EA-6B ICAP-2 Prowler, BuNo 161776, was delivered to the Navy. Fifteen EXCAP models already with the fleet would be upgraded.

28 April The first MAU was established at NAS Brunswick, Maine. Similar in composition to a reserve VP squadron, the MAU's purpose was to train Naval

Reserve personnel in the same type of aircraft being operated by active duty patrol squadrons so that the reserve flight crews could rapidly augment those squadrons in an emergency. Squadron augment units, predecessors of the MAUs, were scheduled to consolidate into the MAUs when they were established.

8 May The first aviation supply wings were presented at the 73rd annual Aviation Ball by Vice Admiral Robert F. Schoultz, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Air Warfare), to: Vice Admiral Eugene A. Grinstead, Jr., SC, USN; Rear Admiral Andrew A. Giordano, SC, USN (Ret); and Commodore John H. Ruehlin, SC, USN, Commanding Officer, Aviation Supply Office, Philadelphia, Pa. Plans for the establishment of a Naval Aviation Supply Officer Program and the authorization of a breast insignia (wings) for qualifying Supply Corps officers had been in progress since 1982.

2 July CVWR-20 concluded its first at-sea deployment since 1978 when it returned from a week aboard *Dwight D. Eisenhower*. This also marked the first time in four years that CVWR-20 operated as a complete air wing and the first deployment of the A-7E Corsair II with a reserve squadron, VA-203.

21 July World War II Marine Corps ace Joseph J. Foss was among four individuals enshrined in the National Aviation Hall of Fame to recognize their outstanding contributions to aviation and their achievements in air and space technology.



This T-28B displayed at NS Anacostia marked the end of the era for the Trojan in the Training Command when it was transferred from VT-27.

1984—Continued

25 July Commodore Oakley E. Osborn, ComPatWingsPac, accepted the first Navy P-3C Orion Update III from Lockheed during a ceremony held at NAS Moffett Field, Calif. VP-31 would train personnel in the operation of the updated P-3 beginning with VP-40, the first fleet operational squadron scheduled to receive the aircraft.

17 August HM-14, after receiving a Joint Chiefs of Staff notice of tasking for rapid deployment to the Gulf of Suez, commenced mine-hunting operations that continued for 22 consecutive days in the troubled area. Earlier, on 6 August, HM-14 had embarked aboard *Shreveport* (LPD 12) with four RH-53Ds which were later augmented by others from the squadron's detachment, as well as an RH-53D from HM-12.

13 September The newly configured S-3B Viking made its first flight at Lockheed facilities in Palmdale, Calif. The latest version of the Viking featured improved avionics and weapons systems, including the Harpoon missile.

22 September HM-14 conducted flight operations to support logistics, medevacs and embassy personnel evacuation after a terrorist bombing of the U.S. Embassy Annex in Beirut, Lebanon.

26 September The XV-15 tilt-rotor aircraft demonstrator completed two weeks of concept tests at NATC Patuxent River, Md.

2 October The U.S. Navy signed a contract to initiate full-scale development of the T-45TS Jet flight training system by McDonnell Douglas. The system's aircraft, the T-45, would replace the T-2Cs and TA-4Js used by the Chief of Naval Air Training in the intermediate and advanced phases of jet flight training.

12 October VF-301's acceptance of its first F-14 Tomcat marked the introduction of the F-14 into the Naval Air Reserve Force as part of the Navy's total force defense concept.

28 November Deliveries of the F/A-18 Hornet were resumed four months after the McDonnell Douglas Corporation announced it would bear costs of modifications to correct a fatigue-related problem in the tail area of the aircraft.

30 November *Nimitz*, with CVW-8 embarked, sortied in response to national tasking. After the Cuban government denied the U.S. Coast Guard permission

to tow a U.S. vessel which had lost power and drifted into Cuban waters, a brief show of force by *Nimitz* defused the incident. The carrier later resumed a scheduled four-day port visit to St. Thomas, V.I.

8 December VA-105 Gunslingers returned from a six-month deployment to MCAS Iwakuni, Japan, in the Western Pacific. The squadron's assignment to MAG-12, 1st MAW marked the first time a Navy squadron participated in the Marine Corps Unit Deployment Program and the first time a Navy squadron came under the operational control of the Marine Corps since World War II.

28 December VXE-6 rescued the aircrew and passengers of a downed LC-130 Hercules near McMurdo Station in the Antarctic. The successful rescue was made by another LC-130 in unexplored terrain under extreme environmental conditions within 16 hours of the incident.

31 December The first T-47A for Naval Flight Officer navigation training was delivered to the Naval Air Training Command by Cessna Aircraft Corporation under a five-year agreement with the Navy, which encompassed a total training concept. Cessna would provide maintenance and support of the T-47A aircraft, which would replace T-39Ds used in flight officer training.

1985

7 January The Navy selected the F-16N for its aggressor aircraft program. The purchase of 14 of the new aircraft from General Dynamics included supporting material and services. These aircraft would simulate Soviet tactical aircraft during the Navy's air-to-air combat training for fighter pilots.

24 January VA-83 became the first fleet operational squadron to fire successfully an AGM-88 HARM. The missile was launched from an A-7E Corsair II piloted by Lieutenant Commander John Parker who was assigned to a HARM detachment deployed to Naval Weapons Center, China Lake, Calif.

30 January The AV-8B Harrier II became the U.S. Marine Corps' newest tactical aircraft when it began operational service with combat squadron VMA-331 at MCAS Cherry Point, N.C. The new AV-8B was designed to provide close air support for Marine ground troops.

17 February *Independence*, the third carrier to undergo SLEP, arrived at the Philadelphia Naval Shipyard, Pa., for a modernization and overhaul

1985—Continued



The F-16N used by the Navy's adversary squadrons.

1985—Continued



The new AV-8B Harrier II shows its versatility.

designed to extend her service life by 15 years. Indy's flight deck systems would be improved to allow the recovery of high-performance aircraft while the ship traveled at lower speeds. Major changes also included the overhaul of two NATO Seasparrow missile launchers with two others to be installed along with three Phalanx CIWS. Other improvements would result in significant savings in fuel consumption for *Independence*.

21 February The F/A-18 Hornet strike fighter and the LAMPS, which used the SH-60B Seahawk ASW helicopter, deployed overseas for the first time. Both systems operated as part of Battle Group Delta headed by *Constellation* in a routine deployment with the Seventh Fleet to the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean. The Hornets replaced the A-7E Corsair IIs operated by two squadrons assigned to CVW-14, making *Constellation* the Navy's first carrier to have F/A-18s assigned to her air wing. The SH-60B Seahawk helicopter operated as the air subsystem of the LAMPS MK III weapon system, deployed aboard *Crommelin* (FFG 37).

1 March The Undergraduate Naval Flight Officer Training System Upgrade was introduced at NAS Pensacola, Fla., when the first class of prospective NFOs began training on the Cessna T-47A Citation. As part of the new training system upgrade, T-47As replaced the T-39D Saberliners that had been used to train NFOs since 1965.

6 March The Naval Air Systems Command and United Technologies' Sikorsky Aircraft signed a contract for full-scale development and production options for a carrier-borne version of the SH-60B Seahawk. Designated SH-60F, the variant would be used to protect the inner perimeter of carrier battle groups from enemy submarines.

29 March The Navy awarded a contract to the McDonnell Douglas Corporation for development of night attack capabilities for the F/A-18 Hornet aircraft. About 750 F/A-18s would be outfitted with a navigational forward-looking infrared pod, a television-like heads up display, night vision goggles for the pilot, and other improvements.

1985—Continued

1 April VP-68 completed its move from NAS Patuxent River, Md., to NAF Washington, D.C., located at Andrews AFB. Relocation of the reserve antisubmarine warfare squadron, which operated the P-3B Orion, was to make room for the JVX test program at NAS Patuxent River, but also helped balance base loading at NAF Washington. The V-22 Osprey, formerly the JVX, a multiservice, tilt-rotor V/STOL aircraft, was scheduled for testing at the Naval Air Test Center starting in 1988.

12 April VAQ-133 returned the last fleet EA-6B EXCAP aircraft, BuNo 159585, to Grumman Aircraft Corporation for ICAP II modification at the company's facilities on Long Island, N.Y. VAQ-133 began its transition to the ICAP II EA-6B in January 1985.

26 April David Sinton Ingalls, Naval Aviator No. 85 and the Navy's only World War I flying ace, died at his home in Chagrin Falls, Ohio, after a stroke. Ingalls was a member of the First Yale Unit before he was ordered to the Royal Flying Corps and later assigned to Royal Air Force Squadron Number 213, located in Bergues,

France. He shot down four enemy planes and one aerial balloon during the war and later served as Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Aeronautics during the Hoover administration.

30 May The keel was laid for *Wasp* during ceremonies at Ingalls Shipbuilding in Pascagoula, Miss. First of a new class of amphibious ships, the LHD was designed to accommodate helicopters such as the CH-53E Super Stallion and SH-60B Seahawk, as well as the MV-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft and the AV-8B Harrier II.

14 June *Nimitz* was called to the coast of Lebanon for contingency operations in support of United States efforts to release American hostages held in Beirut.

19 June The Navy announced the selection of the Goshawk as the popular name for the T-45A trainer, which was a part of the T-45 training system (formerly VTXTS) scheduled to replace the T-2C and TA-4J aircraft operated by the Training Command. The name Goshawk was previously applied by Curtiss to the F11C-2 fighters which were manufactured for the Navy in 1933.



After a launch from an F/A-18 Hornet, the AMRAAM streaks toward its target during testing at Pacific Missile Test Center, Point Mugu, Calif.

1985—Continued

19 June The first new C-2A with more powerful engines was delivered to NATC Patuxent River, Md., for three months of flight testing. Engines with more horsepower than those of fleet C-2As were installed in the aircraft, and the tests evaluated the effect of the updated engines on aircraft performance and flying qualities.

8 July VAW-120, traditionally an E-2C training squadron, received its first upgraded C-2A Greyhounds for training replacement personnel. Initial operational capability of the aircraft was achieved on time following the delivery of five aircraft in October to VR-24, NAS Sigonella, Italy.

15–17 July The maintainability phase of the AMRAAM was demonstrated successfully at the Pacific Missile Test Center, Point Mugu, Calif. The missile was being tested and evaluated for both the Navy and Air Force by the Air Force Systems Command, Joint Systems Program Office, Eglin AFB, Fla. The demonstration, repeated several times a day for three days, proved it possible to load four AMRAAMs onto the wings of an F/A-18 Hornet in less than 15 minutes. Loading time was critical to the Navy in combat situations both ashore and on board aircraft carriers. Unloading procedures, which were not to exceed four minutes, were performed in an average of two minutes.

29 August The Secretary of the Navy announced the decision to home port *Nimitz's* carrier battle group at Everett, Wash., in the Puget Sound region, scheduled as the home port for up to 15 ships.

2 September Reserve squadron HSL-84 completed its deployment of two detachments aboard reserve frigates which marked the first time in Naval Reserve history that a reserve LAMPS detachment was embarked aboard a ship for an extended period of time. While at sea for two weeks beginning 16 August, Det 1 assigned to *Grey* (FF 1054) and Det 2 assigned to *Lang* (FF 1060) operated as part of a five-ship all-Reserve squadron.

10 October Four of seven Navy F-14s of VF-74 and -103 launched from *Saratoga* intercepted an Egyptian 737 airliner in international waters and directed it to Sigonella, Sicily. The airliner was carrying four Arab terrorists who had earlier hijacked the Italian cruise ship *Achille Lauro* on 7 October and murdered a U.S. citizen. During the operation, the F-14s were refueled by Navy KA-6D tankers. Other aircraft which assisted

in the intercept were Navy E-2C Hawkeyes of VAW-125, EA-6B Prowlers and an Air Force C-135.

13 October *Coral Sea* returned to the Mediterranean Sea for her first Sixth Fleet deployment since 1957. Commanded by Captain Robert H. Ferguson, with CVW-13 embarked, it was also the first deployment of the F/A-18 to the Mediterranean. The aircraft were assigned to VFA-131 and -132.

15 October A Tomahawk antiship missile was launched from *Norton Sound* at the Pacific Missile Test Center's Sea Test Range off the coast of California. The test successfully demonstrated the missile's vertical launch system as well as its ability to search for, find and strike a target at sea. The Tomahawk was capable of carrying either a nuclear or conventional warhead.

19 October VFA-303, the first Naval Reserve squadron to transition the F/A-18, received its first aircraft during ceremonies at NAS Lemoore, Calif. Delivery of the eight aircraft ended two years of preparation at NAS Alameda, Calif., where the squadron was home ported until its move to Lemoore in 1983 for training in the Hornets. Later, on 31 October, Lieutenant Bram B. Arnold of VFA-303 landed aboard *Ranger*, becoming the first Reserve pilot to land an F/A-18 aboard an aircraft carrier.

28 October The first prototype model of the S-3B Viking, an operational capability upgrade to the S-3A, arrived at NATC Patuxent River, Md., for developmental test and evaluation. The "B" configuration, extensively updated with state-of-the-art avionics and the Harpoon missile control and launch system, was developed to counter the threat of the new generation of sophisticated Soviet submarines and to enhance the aircraft's multimission capability.



The new S-3B Viking during tests at Naval Air Test Center, Patuxent River, Md.

1985—Continued

31 October Cuts in deployment schedules were ordered by CNO to eliminate excessive at-sea periods for ships and aircraft squadrons. This was intended to enhance efficient use of the expanded Navy; and, at the same time, allow crews more time at home with their families. During an interview, the CNO announced major turnaround ratios of 2:1 or better, assuring sailors that battle groups would spend a maximum of six months at sea.

9–17 November A detachment from VP-66 participated in Operation Hat Trick II operating out of NS Roosevelt Roads, P.R. It was a coordinated operation with the Coast Guard in the war against illegal drug traffic. The operation involved general area surveillance and location of suspect vessels.

13 December VC-10 was tasked to fly cover for a U.S. warship exercising rights of navigation in international waters off the southern coast of Cuba. VC-10's regular mission was to provide air service for U.S. Atlantic Fleet ships and aircraft and air defense of Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

1986

8 January With its change of command, CVW-8 became the first air wing to incorporate the wing commander/deputy commander concept (Super CAG), which provided an improved focus on power projection and enhanced tactical development and strike planning. Under this system, the wing commander, O-6, was directly responsible to the assigned battle group commander, both ashore and afloat, and additionally to the carrier commanding officer when embarked. Captain Frederick L. Lewis relieved Captain Daniel L. Rainey, Jr., as Commander, CVW-8, in a ceremony at NAS Oceana, Va. As part of the restructuring, Carrier Air Wing 8 (CVW-8) was redesignated as a "major sea command," reporting to Commander, Carrier Group 8 and additionally to commanding officer, *Nimitz* when embarked.

13 January The T-39 Sabreliner completed its final flight for the U.S. Navy as a training aircraft when VT-86, based at NAS Pensacola, Fla., retired its last T-39D. BuNo 150983 was included among six of the eight remaining Sabreliners which were sent to Davis Monthan AFB, Ariz. Two others were scheduled for use as VIP transports at other Navy and Marine Corps air stations. The T-39 aircraft had completed 20 years and 300,000 hours of service within the Naval Flight Officer program.

15 January The Royal Maces of VA-27 officially became the first recipients of the Grampaw Pettibone Trophy during a ceremony at the Officer's Club on the Washington Navy Yard, D.C. Commander Joseph P. Sciabarra, CO of the NAS Lemoore, Calif.-based squadron, accepted the award from Secretary of the Navy John F. Lehman. The trophy was commissioned by Paul Warner, son of the originator of Grampaw Pettibone, and would be awarded annually to the individual or organization that contributed the most toward aviation safety awareness through written communications.

22 January Vice President George H. W. Bush was the key participant at the official inaugural marking the year-long observance of the 75th Anniversary of Naval Aviation at the National Air and Space Museum, Washington, D.C. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger and Secretary of the Navy John F. Lehman also attended.

28 January Naval Aviator and astronaut Commander Michael John Smith and six other astronauts were killed in a massive explosion of the space shuttle *Challenger* shortly after its launch from Kennedy Space Center, Fla. The explosion was triggered by escaping propellant combustion products, which cut into the shuttle's liquid-fuel booster. Commander Smith was a graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and the only Navy member of the space shuttle crew.

20 February Rear Admiral Richard H. Truly was appointed the Associate Administrator of Space Flight within the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Truly was designated a Naval Aviator in October 1960 and had served as Commander, Naval Space Command since its establishment in 1983.

18 March The second F-21 Kfir squadron, and the first assigned to the Marine Corps, was established as VMFT-401 at MCAS Yuma, Ariz. Appropriately nicknamed Snipers, the squadron provided adversary training support to the Fleet Marine Force and other units. VF-43, at NAS Oceana, Va., was the first Navy squadron to receive the F-21s (Israeli-built fighter).

24–25 March Libyan Operations—VP-56 provided ASW patrol assets for "Freedom of Navigation" exercises in the Gulf of Sidra for American carrier aircraft operating in international waters. On 24 March Libyan armed forces fired missiles at U.S. Navy forces operating in the Gulf of Sidra. Following the Libyan missile firings, VAQ-137 co-authored a plan to destroy the Libyan SA-5 missile radar site at Surt. The plan was executed using the electronic capabilities of the

1986—Continued

An Israel F-21A Kfir used by the Navy and Marine Corps for adversary training.



Rockeye cluster bombs used against Libyan corvettes are transported across Coral Sea's flight deck by aviation ordnancemen.



A Libyan Nanuchka II missile boat burns after being hit by a Harpoon missile launched by a VA-85 A-6E Intruder.



The end of an era arrives with the departure of VF-151's F-4S Phantom IIs from Midway and a transpacific flight to NAS North Island, Calif. VF-151 and VF-161 were the last fleet squadrons deployed with the F-4.

1986—Continued

deployed VAQ squadrons and the HARM missile capability of the VA squadrons. VA-81, with its A-7E Corsair IIs, participated in the retaliatory strike against the Surt SA-5 missile site by acting as the decoy group for VA-83s A-7Es, which fired their HARMs against the site, putting it out of action. On the same day, A-6A Intruders from VA-34 attacked and damaged a Libyan Combattante II G-class fast attack missile craft with a Harpoon missile. This was the first operational use of a Harpoon in combat. A follow-up attack by VA-85 aircraft using Rockeye bombs resulted in the sinking of the Combattante. More action followed—Intruders of VA-85 attacked a Libyan Nanuchka II-class missile corvette and dropped Rockeye cluster bombs on the corvette. The damaged Nanuchka II was forced to return to the port of Benghazi. On 25 March a second Nanuchka II-class missile corvette was attacked by a couple of VA-55 Intruders. However, their Rockeyes missed the corvette. This attack was followed up by Intruders from VA-85, firing a Harpoon which destroyed the vessel.

25 March The final carrier launching of a Navy fleet F-4S Phantom II was completed by pilot Lieutenant Alan S. Colegrove and radar intercept officer Lieutenant Greg Blankenship of VF-151. The aircraft was launched from *Midway* during flight operations in the East China Sea. The F-4 was scheduled for replacement by the F/A-18 Hornet.

28 March VFA-106, the Atlantic Fleet F/A-18 readiness squadron, graduated its first class of replacement pilots. Nine of the 10 graduates were aviators assigned to the VFA-137 Kestrels, which were established in 1985.

29 March Lieutenant Commander Donnie L. Cochran, the first African American member of the U.S. Navy's precision flight demonstration squadron, the Blue Angels, completed his initial performance during the team's air show held at Luke AFB, Ariz. Lieutenant Commander Cochran was selected in September 1985 for the number three position on the flight team based at Pensacola, Fla.

14–15 April Operation El Dorado Canyon—F/A-18 Hornets from CVW-13 aboard *Coral Sea* and A-7E Corsair IIs from *America* conducted air-to-surface Shrike and HARM missile strikes against Libyan surface-to-air missile sites at Benghazi and Tripoli, minutes before attacks by the Navy's A-6Es from the two carriers and the Air Force's F-111s. Intruders from VA-55 and -34 conducted a low-level bombing raid on ter-



A VA-55 A-6E Intruder lands on Coral Sea. Intruders from VAs 55 and 34 struck terrorist targets in Benghazi, Libya.

rorist targets in Benghazi, Libya. Aircraft from VA-55 hit the Benina airfield and VA-34 struck the Benghazi military compound. Navy E-2C Hawkeyes and EA-6B Prowlers, along with Marine Corps Prowlers, provided electronic countermeasures and command control capabilities for aircraft involved in the strikes against Libya. CVW-1's F-14A Tomcats and CVW-13's F/A-18 Hornets provided fighter support for the operations.

28 April *Enterprise* transited the Suez Canal, becoming the first nuclear-powered carrier to do so, as it steamed toward the Mediterranean to relieve *Coral Sea*. The transit began at 0300 and took approximately 12 hours to complete.

2 May The feasibility of blimps for active duty was determined by a Navy board and later recommended to the Secretary of the Navy for funding. Studies concerning the usefulness of Navy airships were completed earlier in 1985.

2 May The Navy initiated a contract for the V-22 tilt-rotor aircraft with the team of Bell Helicopter Textron, Fort Worth, Tex., and Boeing-Vertol Company, Philadelphia, Pa., as codevelopers of the joint-services aircraft.

5 May The Secretary of the Navy designated 1986 as the Diamond Anniversary of Naval Aviation, during which significant historical Naval Aviation achievements would be recognized in events throughout the year.

1986—Continued

5 May A reenactment flight of the original NC-4's transatlantic crossing took place as one of the 75th Anniversary commemorative events. The flight was made with two privately owned PBY Catalina flying boats, one painted with the original NC-4 colors, as a reenactment of the original NC-4's trans-Atlantic crossing that began on 8 May 1919. The flight originated from NAS Pensacola, Fla., and commenced the original route from NAS Rockaway Beach, N.Y., and ended in Lisbon, Portugal. The flight was one of the events commemorating the 75th Anniversary of Naval Aviation.



One of the PBY Catalinas that participated in the NC-4 reenactment flight.

13 May The first Shrike launch by a Navy EA-6A was completed by VAQ-209 when Lieutenant Commanders E. L. Brandt and M. J. Corcoran conducted a live firing of an AGM-45 Shrike missile at Naval Weapons Center, China Lake, Calif. The launch occurred during the reserve squadron's annual two weeks of active duty for training.

27 May The helicopter landing trainer IX-514 was approved for use by student Naval Aviators after test-

ing was conducted using UH-1N, SH-3H, SH-60B, and TH-57 aircraft. The training craft provided a platform to shipboard-qualify student helicopter pilots before they joined the fleet.

1 June MAWSPac, previously composed of personnel from VA-128, was officially designated as a separate shore command. During an establishment ceremony on 16 June at NAS Whidbey Island, Wash., Commander Richard P. Dodd was designated as the first commanding officer of the combat readiness training school, which was under the operational and administrative control of Commander, Medium Attack Tactical Electronic Warfare Wing, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

6 June The first Naval Aviation Cadet in 17 years began active duty when Captain Bobby C. Farrar, deputy commander of the Navy Recruiting Command, swore in his son, Sean. The program, which allows personnel to enter aviation officer candidate school and eventually flight training without a college degree, had been suspended in 1969.

28 June As a tribute to the 75th Anniversary of Naval Aviation and Glenn H. Curtiss, a week of festivities began at Hammondsport, N.Y. Events included a reenactment of the Navy's first flight of the A-1 and a permanently mounted scale model of the aircraft, which was unveiled at dedication ceremonies on the shore of Keuka Lake on 29 June.

1 July The Helistat, a flight demonstrator lighter-than-air craft under development by Piasecki Aircraft Company for use by the Forestry Service, crashed at NAEC Lakehurst, N.J., during flight tests. The Helistat was powered by the engines and rotor systems of four SH-34J Seabat helicopters attached to a ZPG-2 airship envelope.

1 July A formal airship development program was approved for the U.S. Navy by Secretary of the Navy



The IX 514, a new training deck for student helicopter pilots.

1986—Continued

John F. Lehman. The naval airship program was initiated in 1985 to provide an airborne early warning capability for a non-carrier battle group with secondary missions of air antisubmarine warfare and search and rescue.

5 August VAQ-131 performed the first fleet launch of a AGM-88A HARM missile from a fleet EA-6B at Naval Weapons Center, China Lake, Calif. The missile was fired from a Prowler flown by Lieutenant Robert Smith, pilot; Lieutenant Commander Kenneth P. Parks, ECMO 1; Lieutenant Michael J. Quinlan, ECMO 2; and commanding officer Commander William F. Headridge, ECMO 3.

18 August An AMRAAM launched at Pacific Missile Test Center, Point Mugu, Calif., from a modified F/A-18 Hornet intercepted its target flying at low altitude in a high clutter environment when it shot down a QF-86 drone. The F/A-18 was flying 890 feet above sea level over the Pacific at Mach .49 and the drone was flying at Mach .68 at 625 feet above the water.

19 August *Carl Vinson*, with CVW-15 aboard, performed fleet operations in the Bering Sea, making it the first carrier since World War II to perform such operations in that part of the world. The carrier returned to NAS Alameda, Calif., on 5 February 1987.

19 August Tests of the CAI Mod 2, an optical landing system for the AV-8B on LHA-class ships, were initiated aboard *Belleau Wood* (LHA 3) for day/night operations. The tests were conducted through 29 August and again from 6-23 October.

1 September The Coral Sea concept, approved by the Secretary of the Navy to provide *Coral Sea* and *Midway* with two squadrons of eight A-6Es each, was initiated with VA-65's assignment to CVW-13 aboard *Coral Sea*. VA-65 was previously assigned to CVW-7.

10 September When *America* returned from its Mediterranean deployment, it marked the first battle group to spend no more than six months overseas as part of the Navy's efforts to reduce deployments. Having deployed to the Sixth Fleet on 10 March 1986, the carrier was relieved by *John F. Kennedy* with Carrier Air Wing 3 (CVW-3).

29 September The Navy's F-14A Plus Super Tomcat completed its maiden flight as it hit Mach 1.1 at 25,000 feet and a maximum altitude of 35,000 feet during engine compatibility and flutter tests performed by

Grumman test pilot Joe Burke. The aircraft was powered by new F110-GE-400 turbofan engines with approximately 35 percent more thrust than current F-14A TF30s.

1 October VRF-31, the Navy's last aircraft ferry squadron, was disestablished at NAS Norfolk, Va. The squadron was established originally as VRF-1 and received its current designation in 1957. It became the Navy's only ferry squadron when VRF-32, on the West Coast, was disestablished in 1972.

17-18 September VFP-206, the Navy's last photoreconnaissance squadron, performed the last catapult and carrier landing of the F-8 aboard *America* when Lieutenant Commander Barry D. Gabler made the final landing.

20 September Naval Aviation personnel were authorized by ALNAV message 202001Z Oct to wear brown shoes and khaki socks with summer khaki uniforms to become effective on 1 April 1987. All officers with aviation designators, qualified flight surgeons, aviation physiologists and enlisted personnel in pay grades E-7 and above were included in the new regulation, which specified a low-quarter, brown leather dress shoe with plain toe. The brown shoes had been removed as part of the uniform on 1 July 1976 after being part of the Naval Aviator's uniform since 1913.

3 November VR-57 flew a C-9B aircraft into the port city of Qingdao in the Peoples Republic of China, becoming the first naval aircraft to do so since the port was closed to the U.S. in 1949. The flight preceded by two days the visit of three naval ships to the port. VR-57, a reserve squadron based at NAS North Island, Calif., was commanded by Commander A. W. Boyce.

31 December VC-8 launched three H-3 helicopters on short notice to support rescue efforts at the Dupont Plaza Hotel fire in San Juan, Puerto Rico. Called the worst hotel disaster in U.S. history, 75 persons stranded on the roof of the hotel were rescued in twilight and darkness by the Redtails.

1987

5 January The first extended deployment for the AV-8B Harrier II began when VMA-331 deployed aboard *Belleau Wood* for a six-month western Pacific cruise.

6 January Reserve CVW-77 and -78 loaned E-2C Hawkeyes to the U.S. Customs Service and the Coast Guard to bolster their federal drug enforcement efforts.

1987—Continued

12 January The airfield at MCAS Camp Pendleton, Calif., was designated Munn Field in honor of Lieutenant General John C. Munn. The general had been Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps and the first Marine Aviator ever to command Camp Pendleton.

19 February The Navy's E-6A Hermes prototype flew for the first time. Flight testing of the new aircraft began on 1 June. The E-6A was a militarized version of Boeing's 707-320B and was scheduled to replace the EC-130 TACAMO aircraft. These aircraft provided an airborne communications link between the Navy's ballistic missile submarine force and national command authorities.

18 March VF-301 took part in an AIM-54A Phoenix missile launch at the Pacific Missile Test Range, Point Mugu, Calif. This was the first use of a Phoenix by a Naval Air Reserve squadron.

19 March The SH-60F CV-Helo conducted its first flight. It was ordered by the Navy in early 1985 as the replacement for the SH-3H Sea King ASW helicopter utilized for the inner-zone defense of carrier battle groups.

29 March VFP-206, the Navy's last light photographic squadron, was disestablished at NAF Washington, D.C. This was also the end of the F-8 Crusader era in Naval Aviation. Some VFP-206 RF-8Gs were sent to the storage facility at Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz., while one was transferred to the National Air and Space Museum. The last two Navy



The E-6A at Boeing Field in Seattle, Wash., during its flight test program.

1987—Continued

RF-8Gs were assigned to the Naval Air Systems Command for test support purposes. The F-14A TARPS aircraft would take on the reserve requirements for photoreconnaissance.

30 March The Navy conducted the first flight of its new BQM-126A target drone at Pacific Missile Test Center, Point Mugu, Calif. It was designed as a lower cost, state-of-the-art replacement for targets currently used. It was capable of flying from sea level up to 40,000 feet.

31 March As part of a reorganization approved by the Under Secretary of the Navy, NARFs were redesignated Naval Aviation Depots (NADEP); the Naval Aviation Logistics Center became the Naval Aviation Depot Operations Center; and the Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Support Office assumed the new title Naval Aviation Maintenance Office. This reorganization centralized support for fleet aviation maintenance.

1 April HM-12 was the first fleet squadron to receive the MH-53E Sea Stallion. This new airborne mine countermeasures helicopter provided a greater tow tension capability, longer on-station time and a new digital automatic flight control system.

6 April The first of 26 F-16N Fighting Falcon supersonic aggressor aircraft was received by the Navy.

25 April The Blue Angels, the Navy's Flight Demonstration Squadron, conducted its first air show using their newly assigned aircraft, F/A-18 Hornets.

18 May Oscar 13, a Navy satellite designed to function as part of the Navy's Transit Satellite Navigation System, celebrated its 20th year of service. It was then the oldest active U.S. satellite.

22 May Marine Corps Aviation celebrated its 75th anniversary. On 22 May 1912, 1st Lieutenant Alfred A.

Cunningham, USMC, reported to the Naval Aviation Camp at Annapolis, Md., for duty in connection with aviation. Marine Corps Aviation has been an active and important part of Naval Aviation ever since.

5 June The Navy Department awarded a contract to Westinghouse-Airship Industries to build a prototype airship for fleet operations as an airborne early warning and communications platform. The Navy terminated its lighter-than-air program in 1961 and ceased operation of its last airship in 1962.

22 June The Navy's newest transport aircraft, the C-20D Gulfstream IV, was received by Fleet Logistics Support Wing Detachment, NAF Washington, D.C.



The C-20D Gulfstream

26 June The night-attack version of the AV-8B Harrier II conducted its maiden flight at McDonnell-Douglas' St. Louis, Mo., facility. This was followed by operational test and evaluation of the aircraft later in the summer. The upgrade to this aircraft would greatly expand the operational envelope by utilizing state-of-the-art navigation equipment and night-vision devices.

30 June The Navy received its first SH-60F Seahawk (Carrier Inner Zone Helicopter). Operational test and evaluation of the aircraft began in December. The SH-60F would replace the SH-3H Sea King used by HS squadrons.

30 June VX-5 conducted the first successful firing of a HARM from an A-6E Intruder. This was the first in a series of missile launches planned to test the SWIP

1987—Continued

configuration for the A-6E. The new configuration would also allow the Intruder to be armed with Harpoon and Maverick missiles. These weapons systems would provide increased availability of standoff weapons for Navy carrier air wings.

6 July SH-60B and SH-2F helicopters, modified for Special Middle East Force duties, were deployed. The modifications included special mission defensive equipment, such as the M-60 machine gun and special countermeasure and infrared electronic devices.

10 July The Navy awarded a contract to Boeing to upgrade a P-3 to the Update IV version, which would include an updated avionics suite to address the problem of the newer, quieter submarines.

14 July VAQ-131 began the first Pacific Fleet deployment of the EA-6B with HARM aboard *Ranger*.

15 July Commander Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet initiated extensive modifications to LAMPS MK I and MK III aircraft to increase survivability and surface surveillance capability during Persian Gulf operations.

25 July Naval Aviator Admiral Thomas H. Moorer was enshrined in the National Aviation Hall of Fame in Dayton, Ohio.

27 July HM-14 was called upon for a rapid response deployment to the Persian Gulf and departed 72 hours later with its RH-53Ds to counter mines being laid by Iranian forces. HM-14 assets were flown by USAF C-5 and C-141 aircraft to Diego Garcia where its helicopters were reassembled and placed aboard *Guadalcanal*. The squadron conducted sweeping and hunting operations in the Persian Gulf until relieved by surface mine-sweeping units.

1 August Distribution began to Pacific Fleet aviation units for laser eye protection devices to counter the emerging laser threat.

1 August Commander, Naval Air Force, U.S. Atlantic Fleet began support of an average of five to seven LAMPS helicopter detachments operating on convoy duty in the Persian Gulf.

10 August The first of four new P-3 Weapons Systems Trainers (2F140) was received by the Navy at NAS Moffett Field, Calif. The trainers provided state-of-the-art capabilities for training personnel in ASW.

21 August COMNAVAIRPAC Vice Admiral James E. Service retired and relinquished his Gray Eagle title to Lieutenant General Frank E. Petersen, Commanding General, Marine Corps Development and Education Command, Quantico, Va. General Petersen was designated a Naval Aviator in October 1952, becoming the first African American aviator in the Marine Corps. He was the first African American to receive the Gray Eagle award.

10 September VC-6 Det 1 deployed aboard *Iowa* (BB 61) with the Pioneer RPV for a NATO and Indian Ocean cruise. This marked the beginning of battle-ship-operated RPVs providing independent reconnaissance and naval gunfire support capabilities.



The Navy's Pioneer RPV (Remotely Piloted Vehicle).

19 September *Wasp* was christened. She was the first of a new class of amphibious assault ships (LHD). Her primary mission was to deploy and land elements of a Marine air and ground task force during an assault by employing helicopters, landing craft and amphibious vehicles. The ship would operate the AV-8B Harrier II, as well as various types of helicopters, and the new air cushion landing craft (LCAC).

21 September The Navy received the first updated version of the F/A-18 Hornet, the F/A-18C. Upgrades included the advanced medium-range air-to-air missile, and the infrared imaging Maverick missile. This version provided for reliability, survivability and maintainability of the fuel system and additional growth capabilities in the areas of computer memory, speed and interface channels for the mission computer.

29 September *Coral Sea* departed for a Mediterranean cruise operating under a new concept called the "Coral Sea configuration." To help streamline aircraft maintenance, the two attack squadrons on board used a shared maintenance concept.

1987—Continued

30 September The deployment of the first AV-8B Harrier II to the Mediterranean Sea began as *Nassau* left her home port of Norfolk Va., en route to the Mediterranean. The AV-8Bs on board were assigned to VMA-231.

8 October HML(A)-169 became the first Marine Corps squadron to deploy operationally with the new AH-1W Super Cobra. The unit deployed to the Persian Gulf aboard *Okinawa* (LPH 3). The AH-1W was capable of simultaneously employing the Hellfire, TOW and Sidewinder missiles. It also had a new heads-up display and bigger engines to give the ground support gunship greatly increased mission capabilities.

30 October The Navy established the designation C-28A, which would be assigned to a Cessna 404 (Titian Ambassador) 8- to 10-passenger, twin-engine plane. The aircraft would be used to transport personnel and cargo.

16 November The Navy accepted the first production F-14A (Plus) Tomcat. The aircraft was part of a two-step program leading to the F-14D, an advanced air superiority aircraft. Improvements in the F-14A (Plus) included two new, more powerful engines and better reliability, operability, maintainability and fuel consumption.

5 December VP-62 became the first Reserve patrol squadron to transition to the Navy's most current maritime patrol plane, the P-3C Orion Update III. The Update III featured state-of-the-art computer integration equipment, an improved infrared detection system, a Harpoon air-to-surface missile capability and the ability to carry a variety of other weapons.

7 December The Naval Test Pilot School at NAS Patuxent River, Md., received the first of three HH-65 Dolphin helicopters on loan from the Coast Guard.

10 December The X-31A designation was established and was applied to the enhanced fighter maneuverability (EFM) technology demonstrator aircraft which was never intended for production. The EFM was designed to provide dramatic improvements in maneuver agility for fighter aircraft during close-in aerial combat, as well as in transonic and supersonic engagements and in-ground attack applications.

15 December The YEZ-2A designation was established and was assigned to the Navy's operational development model (ODM) airship. Potential use for the YEZ-2A airship was as an organic asset of surface action groups to serve as a fuel-efficient, long-endurance airborne platform for area surveillance and communications, command and control.



The F-14A (PLUS) at Grumman's Calverton, N.Y., flight test facility.

1987—Continued

17 December The first fleet S-3A Viking, retrofitted to an S-3B configuration, entered service with VS-27 at NAS Cecil Field, Fla. This update provided major weapon systems improvements, including a new acoustic processor, new electronic support measures system, target imaging radar, the Harpoon missile, and an electronic countermeasures system. The modifications greatly increased the Viking's multiple-mission capability.

21 December Changes to the Office of Chief of Naval Operations, required by the Goldwater-Nichols DoD Reorganization Act of 1986, resulted in the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Air Warfare) being redesignated Assistant Chief of Naval Operations (Air Warfare). This organization had been established originally on 18 August 1943 as Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Air) and modified on 15 July 1971 to Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Air Warfare).

21 December The Secretary of the Navy announced he had approved the opening of aircrew assignments to women for the Navy's two shore-based fleet air reconnaissance squadrons flying EP-3 Orions.

31 December For the first time in its history, the Naval Air Reserve Force completed a full calendar year without a major aircraft mishap. During 1987, the force consisted of 52 operational squadrons and over 400 aircraft.

1988

11 January Colonel Gregory "Pappy" Boyington, top World War II Marine Corps ace, died at age 75. He was CO of the VMF-214 Black Sheep during World War II and was credited with the destruction of 28 Japanese aircraft. On 3 January 1944, he was shot down over Rabaul, captured by the Japanese and was a POW for the next 20 months. Colonel Boyington received the Medal of Honor for his actions in combat while CO of VMF-214 from 12 September 1943 to 3 January 1944.



A close-up of Gregory "Pappy" Boyington in World War II flight gear.

17 March Vanguard I, the world's longest orbiting man-made satellite, built by the Naval Research Laboratory, marked its 30th anniversary in space. It was the first satellite to use solar cells to power its instrumentation. Although the satellite's radio transmitter was no longer operative, it provided a wealth of information on air density, temperature ranges and micrometeorite impact during its six years of transmitting.

11 April The Navy's first F-14A (Plus) to be assigned to an operational squadron was accepted by VF-101 at NAS Oceana, Va. The F-14A (Plus) had two General Electric F-110 engines that each developed 7,000 pounds more thrust than the original Tomcat power plants. This additional power greatly extended the performance capabilities of the aircraft.

16 April The Navy's new trainer, the T-45A Goshawk, took its maiden flight at Douglas Aircraft Company, Long Beach, Calif. The T-45 was scheduled to become the Navy's primary aircraft for training Naval Aviators.



The T-45A Goshawk in flight.

18 April The Navy retaliated against Iran following the 14 April incident in which *Samuel B. Roberts* (FFG 58) struck an Iranian mine in international waters. The retaliation involved both surface and air units. CVW-11 squadrons from *Enterprise* were the major aviation participants. VAW-117's Nighthawks provided airborne early warning tracking and analysis of targets as well as air intercept control. The initial American strikes centered around a surface group action against two Iranian oil platforms that had been identified as support bases for Iranian attacks on merchant shipping. Elements of CVW-11 provided air support for the surface groups in the form of surface combat air patrols, flying A-6E Intruders and A-7E Corsair IIs, and combat air patrols with F-14 Tomcats.



The Iranian oil platforms targeted for a retaliation strike following the damaging of *Samuel B. Roberts* (FFG 58) by an Iranian mine in international waters.

The initial action began with coordinated strikes by two separate surface groups. One group, consisting of two destroyers and one amphibious ship, attacked the Sassan platform while the other group, comprising a guided missile cruiser and two frigates, attacked the Sirri platform. Iranian response to the destruction of the two oil platforms involved the dispatching of numerous gunboats to prey on various targets in the Persian Gulf. Following an attack by Iranian Boghammar speedboats on an American-flagged supply ship and a Panamanian-flagged ship, A-6Es from VA-95 were vectored in on the speedboats by an American frigate. The aircraft dropped Rockeye cluster bombs on the speedboats, sinking one and damaging several others.

Action continued to escalate. *Joshan*, an Iranian Combattante II Kaman-class fast attack craft, challenged *Wainwright* (CG 28) and her surface group. The American ships responded to the challenge by sinking *Joshan*. Fighting continued when the Iranian frigate *Sahand* departed Bandar Abbas and challenged elements of an American surface group. She was observed by two VA-95 A-6Es while they were flying surface combat air patrol for *Joseph Strauss* (DDG 16).

Sahand launched missiles at the A-6Es, and the Intruders replied with launches of two Harpoons and four laser-guided Skipper bombs. This was followed by a Harpoon firing from *Joseph Strauss*. The weapons delivered against *Sahand* were successful.

Fires blazing on her decks eventually reached her magazines resulting in the final explosions that led to her sinking. The loss of *Sahand*, one of Iran's most modern ships, was not enough to stop the suicidal sorties of the Iranian Navy. A sister ship, *Sabalan*, departed her port for operations in the gulf. She fired on several A-6Es from VA-95 with a surface-to-air missile. One of the Intruders responded with a laser-guided bomb that hit *Sabalan* and stopped her dead in the water. The Iranian frigate was taken in tow by an Iranian tug with the stern partially submerged. VA-95's aircraft, as ordered, did not continue the attack. This action ended the retaliatory strikes against Iran that began as a result of Iranian mining in international waters.

6 May A prototype F/A-18D Hornet equipped as an advanced night attack aircraft made its maiden flight at McDonnell Douglas in St. Louis, Mo. The night attack version was equipped with a new FLIR sensor called TINS designed to help pilots navigate and assist in locating, identifying and attacking ground targets at night. The F/A-18D was a two-seat model and would employ a pilot and Naval Flight Officer in tactical missions.

16 May The production model of the Navy's new E-6A communications aircraft arrived at NATC Patuxent River, Md., for extensive electromagnetic testing.

1988—Continued

23 May The revolutionary tilt-rotor aircraft, the V-22 Osprey, made its debut during rollout ceremonies at Bell Helicopter's facility in Arlington, Tex. The V-22 combined the attributes of a helicopter and a turbo-prop aircraft and was developed from the start to serve the needs of all four armed services.

14 June The Sunday Punchers of VA-75 became the first fleet A-6 squadron to launch a HARM. CO Commander John T. Meister and operations officer Lieutenant Commander Richard D. Jaskot scored a direct hit on a target ship. The missile was fired from a new A-6E SWIP aircraft. The modified aircraft was upgraded to launch the latest air-to-surface missiles including HARM, Harpoon and Maverick, as well as its normal array of air-to-surface weapons.

14 June Reserve VP-62 fired its first AGM-84 Harpoon missile and scored a direct hit, signaling a new chapter in Naval Aviation history. The missile was launched from the Broadarrows' new P-3C Orion Update III aircraft during coordinated fleet operations with other 2nd Fleet units. Based at NAS Jacksonville, Fla., the squadron had been selected earlier as the first Reserve patrol squadron to receive the P-3C as part of the Navy's horizontal integration program.

13 July Carrier Airborne Early Warning Weapons School was established as a separate command on the same principles as Top Gun and Strike University. Emphasis would be on warfare training for E-2C Hawkeye aircrews.

22 July Reserve VA-304 took delivery of a KA-6D, marking the introduction of the Intruder to the Naval Air Reserve. By September 1988 the squadron had three KA-6Ds and two A-6Es.

2 August *Constellation* successfully fought a severe fire in the main engineering space using the installed HALON firefighting equipment; this was the first carrier use of the system in fighting a fire.

5 August Dwaine L. Lyon received his Wings of Gold and was commissioned an ensign, becoming the first NAVCAD to complete the jet strike training pipeline since the NAVCAD program was reinstated in 1986. The program, which began in 1935, was an important source of Naval Aviators until it was terminated in 1965. Under the revived NAVCAD program, aviation cadets with a minimum of two years of college or its equivalent would undergo flight training as noncommissioned officers.

17 August The maiden flight of the Navy's new Helicopter Combat Support aircraft, HH-60H, was conducted at Sikorsky Aircraft, Stratford, Conn. The helicopter was a derivative of the SH-60F. The primary mission of the new HH-60H would be strike rescue with secondary tasks involving special warfare missions. The HH-60Hs were the first new aircraft purchased for and operated exclusively by the Naval Air Reserve.

30 September The Navy's last operational reciprocating-engine aircraft, a C-1A Trader (BuNo 146048), retired from active service and was transferred to the Naval Aviation Museum, NAS Pensacola, Fla. The C-1A had been based at the air station, providing carrier onboard delivery support for the Navy's training carrier *Lexington*.

1 October HCS-5 was established at NAS Point Mugu, Calif., the first squadron of its kind. HCS-5 was a Reserve squadron with a primary mission of combat search and rescue (strike rescue) and special warfare support. It would operate the HH-60H Seahawk.

3 October The aircraft designation A-12A was established, designating a new carrier-based, attack aircraft with a two-man crew. The A-12 aircraft program was canceled in 1991.

14 October The Navy selected Lockheed Aeronautical Systems Company to develop a replacement for the P-3C Orion maritime patrol aircraft. The new aircraft, designated LRAACA for long-range, air antisubmarine warfare-capable aircraft, would have new fuel-efficient, modern-technology turboprop engines to increase its range and efficiency, an increased payload capability and an improved avionics suite. The program was canceled in 1990.

3 November The Navy's first SLAM, AGM-84E, rolled out at McDonnell Douglas' facility in St. Charles, a suburb of St. Louis, Mo. SLAM was a derivative of the Harpoon antiship missile system. It was designed for deployment from carrier-based aircraft and allowed an aircraft to attack land targets and ships in port or at sea from an extended range, in excess of 60 nautical miles.

10 November Ensign Joy D. Warner became the first woman to earn her Wings of Gold through the newly reinstated NAVCAD program. She joined the program in June 1987 and completed basic flight training with HT-8.

1988—Continued

29 November The Navy Department transferred an F-4S Phantom II (BuNo 157307) to the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum, upon its arrival at Dulles International Airport, Va. This F-4 saw action in Vietnam and was a MiG killer. On 21 June 1972 the F-4, piloted by Commander Samuel C. Flynn, Jr., with Lieutenant William H. John as radar intercept officer, shot down a MiG-21. The F-4 was assigned to VF-31 operating off *Saratoga* at the time. The museum planned to display the F-4 in a future Vietnam war exhibit.

31 December The Aviation Officer Continuation Pay (AOCP) program was terminated and a new program was instituted on 1 January 1989. Called Aviation Continuation Pay (ACP), the new program applied only to pilots and Naval Flight Officers below paygrade O-5. Determination of eligible communities and payment rates was based on analysis of current year group shortages, department head requirements and other pertinent management factors. ACP payment could reach up to \$12,000 for each year of the contract if the officer agreed to remain on active duty to complete 14 years of continuous service.

31 December The year 1988 ended as the “safest in aviation history” for the Navy/Marine Corps team, according to Secretary of the Navy William L. Ball. 48 class “A” mishaps were recorded—down to 2.16 mishaps per 100,000 flight hours for 1988.

1989

4 January Two F-14A Tomcats flown by crews from VF-32 of NAS Oceana, Va., downed two hostile Libyan MiG-23 aircraft in the central Mediterranean north of the Libyan port of Tobruk over international waters. The squadron was deployed with CVW-3 aboard *John F. Kennedy*, which had been participating in routine training exercises off the northeastern tip of the Libyan coast when the group was approached by the two Flogger jets from the Al Bumbah air base. After repeated attempts for a peaceful intercept, the VF-32 Swordsmen fired their missiles, downing the MiGs.

20 January George H. W. Bush, former Naval Aviator, was inaugurated as the 41st president of the United States during an outdoor ceremony at the U.S. Capitol. As a member of VT-51 during World War II, Bush was shot down while operating a TBM Avenger in the Pacific.

23 February The Navy's Mid Infrared Advanced Chemical Laser/Sea Lite Beam Director (an experimental high-energy laser system) destroyed a Vandal supersonic missile in a test conducted at the White Sands Missile Range, N.Mex. This was the first time a high-energy laser system successfully engaged and destroyed a Vandal missile, flying low and fast in a cruise missile profile. The laser system was designed to show that a laser could acquire, track, and focus enough energy on a supersonic target to destroy it.

19 March The V-22 Osprey tilt-rotor aircraft made its first flight at Bell Helicopter Textron's Flight Research Center, Arlington, Tex. The aircraft reached a maximum speed of 20 knots and an altitude of 30 feet during a 15-minute flight in the helicopter mode, which initiated phase one of flight tests. The V-22 was the first modern weapons system designed from conception to meet the requirements of all four U.S. armed services.

31 March VP-62 completed transition to the P-3C Update III, the newest production Orion, marking the first time in Reserve patrol history that a Reserve squadron received the latest state-of-the-art aircraft.

3 April An A-6E modified with a new composite wing made its first flight at Wichita, Kans. Manufactured by Boeing from graphite/epoxy composite materials, the new wing was stronger than the original metal wing on the Intruder. Grumman Aircraft Systems Division would install the wings on its newly manufactured A-6s. The new wings would be installed by Navy depots on the older A-6s.

16 April The VS-30 Diamondcutters became the first fleet S-3 squadron to fire a Harpoon antiship missile. The launch resulted in a direct hit on the target by a detachment assigned to VS-30 as it participated in exercise North Star '89 aboard *America*.

19 April While operating in the Caribbean, *Coral Sea* responded to a call for assistance from *Iowa* (BB 61) due to an explosion in the battleship's number two gun turret in which 47 crew members were killed. The explosive ordnance disposal team from *Coral Sea* removed volatile powder charges from the ship's 16-inch guns and flooded powder magazines. *Coral Sea* also dispatched a surgical team and medical supplies. VC-8, using SH-3G helicopters, also performed medevac and logistical support to *Iowa*.

15 May H. Lawrence Garrett III was sworn in as the 68th Secretary of the Navy, succeeded William L. Ball III. Secretary Garrett was commissioned as a Naval Aviation Cadet in 1964 and served as a Naval Flight Officer with VP-50 in Vietnam.

1989—Continued



The new V-22 Osprey in flight.

22 June HS-10 accepted the Navy's first SH-60F CV-Helo inner zone antisubmarine warfare aircraft during a ceremony at NAS North Island, Calif. In October, HS-10 became the Navy's only SH-60F fleet readiness squadron when it transferred all SH-3 training to HC-1 and HS-1.

24 June The first development free-flight test of a SLAM resulted in a direct hit against a simulated surface-to-air missile communication site at San Nicholas Island, Pacific Missile Test Center Range, Calif. The carrier-based aircraft missile was launched from an A-6E (SWIP) Intruder. During its flight it was controlled from an F/A-18 Hornet using the Walleye data link for man-in-the-loop control. SLAM was a derivative of the Harpoon missile system, manufactured by McDonnell Douglas.

1 July Rear Admiral Richard H. Truly, serving as the Associate Administrator for Space Flight, Office of Space Flight, National Aeronautics and Space Administration, retired from the Navy and was confirmed by Congress as the administrator of NASA. A Naval Aviator, Rear Admiral Truly was selected as an astronaut in 1965 and was credited with bringing U.S. backing into an active space program after the Space Shuttle *Challenger* accident.

1 July The Naval Aviation Museum officially changed its name to the National Museum of Naval Aviation.

8 July HCS-5, NAS Point Mugu, Calif., accepted the first Sikorsky HH-60H strike rescue and special warfare operations helicopters. The HH-60H was the first aircraft to be produced specifically for the Naval Air Reserve.

22 July Admiral Marc A. Mitscher, Naval Aviator #33, was enshrined in the National Aviation Hall of Fame. In 1919, Mitscher commanded the NC-1, one of the three seaplanes that attempted the first airborne trans-Atlantic crossing. Only NC-4 was successful. In 1928, Mitscher made the first takeoff and landing on *Saratoga* in a Vought UO-1. His distinguished service during World War II included command of *Hornet*; Patrol Wing 2; Fleet Air, Noumea; and units of the U.S. Army Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps aviation groups, and contingents of the Royal New Zealand Air Force. Of particular significance was his command of Task Force 58. Mitscher received many citations for his wartime service.

1 August *Coral Sea* and *America* departed early from separate port visits when they were diverted to the eastern Mediterranean as a show of force in the wake of the suspected hanging of Marine Corps Lieutenant Colonel William R. Higgins by Middle East terrorists, and threats to other hostages. Lieutenant Colonel Higgins had been kidnapped in February 1988 while a member of the United Nations peacekeeping forces in Lebanon. *Midway*, operating with Battle Group Alfa, was originally scheduled to participate in Pacific Exercise-89 but instead was repositioned to fill

1989—Continued

the carrier commitment in the Indian Ocean. The carrier remained on station in the northern Arabian Sea until mid-October, extending its deployment by one month.

3 August *Ranger* rescued 39 Vietnamese refugees, adrift for 10 days on a barge in heavy seas and monsoon rains in the South China Sea, about 80 miles from NAS Cubi Point, R.P. SH-3s from HS-14 assisted. An A-6 from VA-145 spotted the barge, which had apparently broken loose from its mooring near a small island off the coast of Vietnam with 10 men on board. Twenty-nine other refugees from a sinking refugee boat climbed aboard the barge when it drifted out to sea. After examination by medical personnel, all were flown to NAS Cubi Point for further processing.

3 August VQ-3 took delivery of two Boeing E-6A Hermes at Seattle, Wash. The arrival of the new strategic communications aircraft marked the entry of the newest generation of TACAMO aircraft into the fleet. The E-6A would eventually replace the Lockheed EC-130Q Hercules in both VQ-3 and its Atlantic Fleet counterpart, VQ-4.

25 August A NASA-designed Scout rocket launched two Navy navigation satellites from Vandenberg AFB, Calif. This marked the culmination of the planned launch program for the TRANSIT system that began in 1962. The Navy relied on TRANSIT for precise position information anywhere on the earth and in all weather conditions. The two satellites were launched “piggyback” style using the SOOS (Stacked Oscars on Scout) system.

7 September An NS-3A modified as the aerodynamic prototype of the ES-3A made its first flight. Sixteen ES-3As would eventually replace the EA-3B Skywarrior in fleet air reconnaissance squadrons.

12 September The Coast Guard retired its last Sikorsky HH-52A Sea Guard. The HH-52A served over 26 years as the Coast Guard’s primary short-range, search and rescue helicopter. It was replaced by the Aerospatiale HH-65A Dolphin.

14 September The first Sikorsky HH-60J Jayhawk medium-range, search and rescue helicopter rolled out in Stratford, Conn. It would replace the Sikorsky HH-3F in Coast Guard service.

14 September The V-22 Osprey made its first flight in full airplane mode. The part helicopter, part air-

plane tilt-rotor aircraft was airborne for about one hour at Bell Helicopter Textron’s Arlington, Tex., facility.

14 September The Navy Aircrew Common Ejection Seat successfully completed a 600-knot dual ejection from an F-14D test sled at China Lake, Calif.

17–21 September Under the direction of Commander, Fleet Air, Caribbean, a number of Navy and Marine Corps squadrons—including HC-2 (Det VI), VP-93, and VC-8—responded to the destruction brought by Hurricane Hugo to the Caribbean by flying in needed supplies to Puerto Rico and evacuating the seriously injured to hospitals.

22 September VMFT-401 transferred its last F-21A Kfir, marking the retirement of this Israeli-built fighter from U.S. Naval Aviation. The F-21A served as an aggressor aircraft.

30 September VAK-208 was disestablished as the last Navy squadron dedicated solely to the mission of aerial refueling. Assigned to Reserve Carrier Air Wing 20, the squadron provided aerial refueling and pathfinder support since its establishment as VAQ-208 in July 1970. It was redesignated VAK-208 on 1 October 1979. Reserve carrier air wing aerial refueling was assumed by VA-304 and -205, transitioning to the A-6E and the KA-6D Intruders.

1 October HAL-4, a Naval Reserve squadron, was officially redesignated HCS-4 with an added mission of strike rescue. HAL-4 was the last Navy gunship squadron.

17 October An earthquake in northern California brought response from HM-15 Detachment 3 and HC-1. Both conducted lifts of food, water, and relief materials to the heavily damaged areas. HC-11 Det 3 also participated in the disaster relief. The amphibious assault ship *Peleliu* provided food and shelter to homeless earthquake victims.

29 October The developmental prototype of the Advanced Capability version of the Grumman EA-6B made its first flight.

1 November NAS Pensacola, Fla., became the last Chief of Naval Air Training command to fully convert to civilian contractors for maintenance on aircraft. In the past, the work had been done by Navy personnel in maintenance ratings. Having the work performed by a civilian company was considered more cost-effective.

1989—Continued

3 November The designation VH-60N was approved for the version of the H-60 helicopter to be used as the worldwide executive transport. Personnel from HMX-1 were responsible for flying the President and his staff in this helicopter.

6–7 November VX-1 set a Naval Aviation record for flying the longest nonstop, air-refueled flight in the E-6A TACAMO aircraft. Two refuelings were made in flight utilizing Air Force KC-10s from March AFB, Calif.

1–2 December *Midway* and *Enterprise*, originally scheduled to conduct joint operations, were put on alert status for Operation Classic Resolve in response to a coup attempt in Manila, R.P. After the situation subsided, *Midway* returned to her home port at Yokosuka, Japan; and *Enterprise* continued her deployment in the Indian Ocean.

2 December VAQ-309 officially received the EA-6B Prowler during ceremonies at NAS Whidbey Island, Wash., becoming the first reserve squadron to operate the modern electronic warfare aircraft.

1990

25 January A helicopter crew from *Guadalcanal* rescued three fishermen after their boat went under three miles off Cape Henry, Va.

25 January HSL-45 Detachment 10; HSL-33 Detachment 3; and HSL-35 Detachment 1 responded to a distress call from the Chinese merchant vessel *Hauzhu*, reported to be sinking 40 miles off the northern coast of the Philippines. Nineteen crew members were recovered.

21 March The SH-2G helicopter was introduced at a flyout ceremony at the Kaman Aerospace Corporation's production facility in Bloomfield, Connecticut. The SH-2G was an upgraded version of the SH-2F helicopter, which was part of the LAMPS MK I. Improvements included a sonobuoy data processing system, changes in the tactical navigation system, more powerful engines, composite rotor blades, an infrared target detection system and several countermeasures systems.

27 March HS-2 became the first Navy squadron to receive the SH-60F inner-zone combat aircraft for operational deployment with the fleet at a ceremony at NAS North Island, Calif. The SH-60F, made by Sikorsky, was a derivative of the SH-60B Seahawk LAMPS MK III helicopter.

17 April The Lockheed Aeronautical Systems Company formally delivered the last P-3 Orion (BuNo 163925) to the U.S. Navy in a ceremony at Palmdale, Calif. It was the 548th P-3 accepted by the Navy since deliveries began in August 1962.

18 May NAVAIR established the model designation BQM-145A for the medium-range unmanned aerial vehicle. The BQM-145A was a programmable reconnaissance drone that could be launched from various tactical aircraft and also from the ground.

18 May The night attack F/A-18D Hornet was introduced into service at the Marine Corps Air Station El Toro, Calif. The F/A-18D was the first two-seat Hornet designated to fly tactical as opposed to training missions. It would replace the A-6 Intruder as the Marine Corps' day/night attack aircraft.

3 June Three days after President Bush ordered an amphibious task force off the coast of Liberia, *Saipan*, *Ponce* (LPD 15) and *Sumter* (LST 1181) began their watch over the events in Liberia ready to assist any additional evacuation of U.S. citizens, should they be threatened by the rebel uprising there.

24 June The wreckage of the Navy's rigid airship, *Macon* (ZRS-5), was located by the Navy submersible *Sea Cliff* (DSV 4) off the coast of Point Sur, Calif., where it had crashed on 12 February 1935. At the time, *Macon* was carrying four Curtiss F9C-2 Sparrowhawk biplane fighters. They were spotted near the wreck of the *Macon*.

26 June The first ship launch of the SLAM was conducted from a Harpoon canister aboard the guided missile cruiser *Lake Champlain* (CG 57). The launch was controlled from a LAMPS MK III helicopter, with video images downlinked to the ship's command information center via the helicopter's Walleye data link pod. The test was conducted at Pacific Missile Test Center's sea test range.

12 July Commander Rosemary Bryant Mariner relieved Commander Charles Hughes Smith as commanding officer of VAQ-34. Commander Mariner was the first woman selected to command an operational aviation squadron.



Commander
Rosemary Bryant Mariner.

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16 July The largest earthquake to strike the Philippines in 14 years rocked Manila and left many northern areas of Luzon destroyed. Marine helicopters assigned to Marine Corps Air Group Task Force 4-90 and HMM-164(C) hauled food, water and medical supplies. CH-46E, CH-53D, and CH-53E helicopters were used for transports, while searches for survivors were conducted by UH-1N and AH-1W helicopters and OV-10 observation planes. Navy SH-3G helicopters assigned to VC-5 at NAS Cubi Point also flew resupply and medical missions. VC-5 helicopters delivered cement-cutting saws and trained operators in rescue parties to help free victims trapped in the rubble.

20 July The Navy terminated a contract with Lockheed Aeronautical Systems for the P-7A for default. The P-7A, formerly known as LRAACA (long-range air anti-submarine warfare capable aircraft), was the planned replacement for the P-3 maritime patrol aircraft.

31 July HC-9, the Navy's only combat search and rescue helicopter unit, was disestablished. Its mission passed to two Navy Reserve special operations squadrons: HCS-5 at Point Mugu, Calif., and HCS-4 at NAS Norfolk, Va. HC-9 had been established in August 1975.

2 August The NAVSTAR navigation satellite was boosted into orbit by a Delta rocket. This was the latest in a series of spacecraft capable of pinpointing the location of U.S. military units.

2 August Iraq invaded Kuwait. At the time, eight U.S. Navy Middle East Force ships were in the Persian Gulf. The carrier battle group of *Independence* with CVW-14 aboard was in the Indian Ocean, and *Dwight D. Eisenhower* with CVW-7 was in the Mediterranean. *Independence's* battle group was directed to proceed to the northern Arabian Sea in support of Operation Desert Shield, a UN sanctioned economic blockade of Iraq.

5 August *Independence's* battle group arrived on station in the Gulf of Oman.

5 August 90–9 January 91 Operation Sharp Edge was authorized by the State Department on 5 August to evacuate noncombatants caught in the civil war in Liberia. *Saipan* and other ships were stationed off the Liberian coast. Marines from 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit were flown into the American embassy compound in Monrovia, Liberia. The MEU's

air combat element, HMM-261(C), was comprised of CH-46Es from HMM-261, CH-53Ds from HMH-362, UH-1Ns and AH-1Ts from HMLA-167, and AV-8Bs from VMA-223. On 28 November a cease-fire was accepted by the opposing Liberian factions and on 30 November the limited evacuation of noncombatants from Monrovia terminated, with a total of 2,609 evacuated, including 330 U.S. citizens. Operation Sharp Edge concluded on 9 January 1991.

7 August *Saratoga* left the U.S. for a previously scheduled deployment to the eastern Mediterranean, with CVW-17 aboard.

7 August *Dwight D. Eisenhower* and her battle group transited the Suez Canal and entered the Red Sea on 8 August.

7 August The EP-3E Aries II, an electronic version of the P-3C, arrived at NAS Patuxent River, Md., to begin four months of extensive performance testing.

15 August Leading a carrier battle group, *John F. Kennedy* deployed from her home port, Norfolk, Va., with CVW-3 aboard. The battle group would be available for potential relief of the *Dwight D. Eisenhower* battle group or additional tasking to be determined by the situation in the Middle East.

16 August Consistent with UN Security Council Resolution 661, a multinational maritime intercept operation involving Naval Aviation forces began intercepting ships going to or from Iraq and Kuwait.

22 August *Saratoga* transited the Suez Canal to take up her station in the Red Sea, where she would relieve *Dwight D. Eisenhower* who would then proceed home.

30 August *John F. Kennedy's* battle group transited the Strait of Gibraltar en route to the Mediterranean Sea.

3 September *Dwight D. Eisenhower* transited the Strait of Gibraltar en route to home port.

6 September Amphibious assault ship *Nassau* transited the Suez Canal.

7 September Amphibious assault ships *Iwo Jima* and *Guam* transited the Suez Canal.

14 September *Nassau* arrived in the Gulf of Oman.

14 September *John F. Kennedy's* battle group transited the Suez Canal into the Red Sea.

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Dwight D. Eisenhower transits the Suez Canal en route to operations in the Red Sea.

16 September *Iwo Jima* and *Guam* arrived in the Gulf of Oman.

1 October *Independence* transited the Strait of Hormuz en route to the Persian Gulf.

3 October *Independence* conducted flight operations in the Persian Gulf. She was the first carrier to do so since 1974, when *Constellation* operated there.

4 October *Independence* left the Gulf after spending three days in its relatively confined and shallow waters. A Pentagon spokesman said the aircraft carrier had successfully completed its mission which was “to demonstrate to our friends and allies in the region that it is possible to put a carrier in the Gulf and carry out operations.”

8 October The two U.S. Marine Corps UH-1N Huey helicopters based on the amphibious assault ship *Okinawa* in the Gulf of Oman disappeared with eight

men aboard during “routine night training operations.” No survivors were found.

28 October U.S. Marines from the amphibious transport ship *Ogden* (LPD 5) boarded the Iraqi vessel *Amuriyah*, bound for Iraq through the Gulf. The vessel refused to halt despite summons from U.S. and Australian ships. The allied ships fired shots across *Amuriyah*'s bow and warplanes from *Independence* buzzed low in warning passes. The Marine boarding party found no banned cargo and the Iraqi craft was allowed to proceed.

1 November *Midway*, with CVW-5 aboard, replaced *Independence* in the northern Arabian Sea.

8 November President Bush announced a decision to double the number of carrier battle groups deployed in support of Operation Desert Shield. *Ranger* with CVW-2, *America* with CVW-1, and *Theodore Roosevelt* with CVW-8 were scheduled to be

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on station by 15 January 1991. The three were to join *Saratoga*, *John F. Kennedy*, and *Midway*.

15 November U.S. and Saudi forces began Operation Imminent Thunder, an eight-day combined amphibious landing exercise in northeastern Saudi Arabia which involved about 1,000 U.S. Marines, 16 warships, and more than 1,100 aircraft. Close air support was provided by Marine aircraft as well as planes from *Midway*, which had entered the Gulf from the northern Arabian Sea for the exercise.

16 November The Navy's newest fighter, the Grumman F-14D Super Tomcat, was formally accepted for fleet service in a ceremony held at NAS Miramar, Calif.

29 November The UN Security Council approved a resolution authorizing the use of military force unless Iraq vacated Kuwait by 15 January 1991.

8 December *Ranger*, with CVW-2 aboard, departed San Diego, Calif., on an unscheduled deployment in support of Operation Desert Shield.

20 December *Independence* returned to her San Diego, Calif., home port from her Persian Gulf deployment.

21 December An Israeli-chartered liberty ferry shuttling 102 crew members from the Israeli port of Haifa back to *Saratoga* capsized and sank off the coast of Israel. Israeli military and police officers rushed out in boats and helicopters to pull sailors from the water. Helicopters flew injured men to two hospitals in Haifa. Twenty U.S. sailors died. In addition, a crew member was missing and presumed drowned.

28 December *America*, with CVW-1 aboard, and *Theodore Roosevelt*, with CVW-8, departed Norfolk, Va., on deployment in support of Operation Desert Shield.

On 3 February 1984, Navy astronaut Captain Bruce McCandless II became the first person to walk untethered in space.





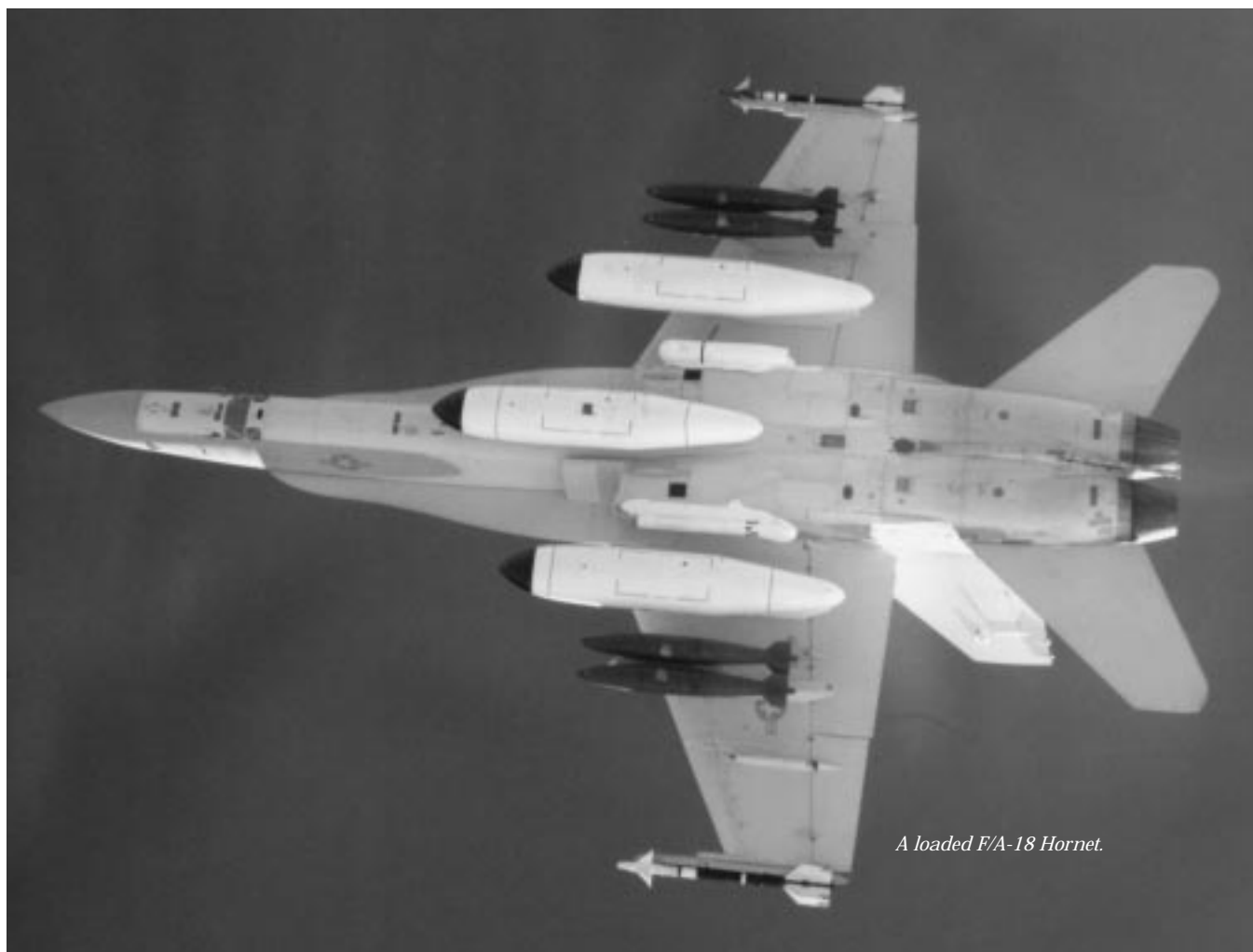
A VFA-113 Hornet aboard Constellation.



A Marine Harrier operating off Tarawa.



A Marine AH-1W Sea Cobra.



A loaded F/A-18 Hornet.