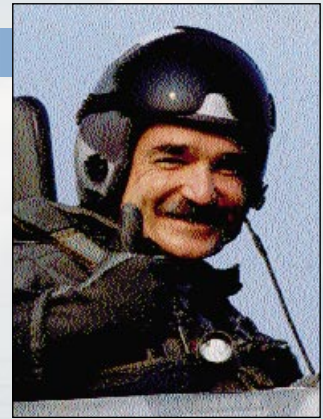


## Naval Aviation: The Force of Choice

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In 1910, civilian pilot Eugene Ely flew a Curtiss biplane from a specially built platform on the cruiser *Birmingham*, proving that aviation could go to sea. A year later Naval Aviation was born, and it has both endured and embraced constant change ever since. As the world situation changed or technology advanced, Naval Aviation adapted and improved. This flexibility has allowed us to remain the force of choice—ready to go in harm's way when the president asks, "Where is the closest carrier?"

The Naval Aviation Vision—documented in the publication *Naval Aviation . . . Forward Air Power . . . From the Sea*—is the result of many thoughtful discussions and a lot of hard work by our Strategic Long Range Vision team. The team was composed of fleet aviators from all communities in Navy and Marine Corps aviation, with a strong representation from the junior officer corps. Working diligently over a nine-month period, the team conducted a thorough review of what we in Naval Aviation will be required to do in future strate-

### *Naval Aviation's unique expeditionary nature will continue to make it the force of choice for crisis response.*

gic environments around the world. The team's objective was to take an intensive look at the way we do business and how we can improve Naval Aviation to remain vital and relevant to our nation's security needs. The team's review was wide ranging—from how we are organized, to future budgets, to technology trends—including everything from how we recruit and train to how we supply and sustain. Our goal was to produce a document that would take a balanced and inclusive approach to Naval Aviation—one that we can all truly "own." I take this opportunity to extend my heartfelt thanks for the team's hard work.

The dramatic changes of the last several years and the subsequent reorientation of our naval strategy—as articulated in the 1992 strategic concept paper . . . *From the Sea* and the 1994 follow-on *Forward . . . From the*

*Sea*—toward an expeditionary force are serving the nation well. Our team concluded that this strategy remains relevant. *There is no need for a major reinvention of Naval Aviation.* We must, however, leverage technology and innovation to exploit capabilities in information warfare, precision strike and operational maneuver. In this era of information technology and open global markets, a potential adversary has the ability to easily obtain sophisticated weapon systems. Our challenge is to remain two steps ahead. This dangerous, unpredictable world will make our unique, unencumbered forward presence even more critical in the 21st century. Our expeditionary nature and flexible air power from the sea will continue to make Navy and Marine Corps aviation the force of choice.

Fly safe. Be the best!