

THE YEAR IN REVIEW 1998



Looking back at 1998, the Navy was challenged by unrest on foreign soil. Carrier battle groups formed around *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69), *Enterprise* (CVN 65), *Kitty Hawk* (CV 63), *Independence* (CV 62), *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72), *Nimitz* (CVN 68), *John C. Stennis* (CVN 74), *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70) and *George Washington* (CVN 73) maintained a strong forward presence across the globe. Recurring crises forced extended time underway as Naval Aviation proved indispensable to the success of Operations Deep Freeze, Deliberate Forge, Desert Fox, Desert Thunder, Determined Falcon, Eagle Eye, Frontier Lance, Infinite Reach, Northern Watch, Resolute Response, Safe Departure and Southern Watch.

In pursuit of the Navy's right-sizing policy, the fleet bid farewell to *Independence* after 39 years of service, and 33-year veteran *Guam* (LPH 9). Despite the reputed "worst weather in 24 years," Antarctic Development Squadron Six closed a remarkable chapter in Naval Aviation history by beginning its final tour in Antarctica.

Naval Aviation continued to keep pace with national defense requirements as new commands were added to the fleet. *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75) and *Bonhomme Richard* (LHD 6) took their places in the battle line, while Strike Fighter Squadron 122 was established, nicknamed the *Flying Eagles*.

Reflecting a rapidly changing world, many commands were redesignated to adapt to new or modified missions. Moving toward a joint doctrine, Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadrons (VAQ) were redesignated Electronic Attack Squadrons, retaining the VAQ designation.

Exciting milestones were reached as the fleet received its first operational P-3C *Orion* Anti-Surface Improvement Program aircraft as well as the first production AGM-154A Joint Standoff Weapon. Rounding out a challenging year, the Navy's Flight Demonstration Squadron recorded its first trap when Commander Patrick Driscoll landed *Blue Angel* No. 1 aboard *Harry S. Truman*.

Looking to the future, the V-22 *Osprey* made its first night flight, while 21st century technology permitted the inaugural test flight of the RQ-4A *Global Hawk* unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) and the first successful flight of the Tier III Minus *Dark Star* high-altitude UAV, as well as the first flight of the initial production T-6A *Texan II* trainer.

The challenges met by Naval Aviation in 1998 are highlighted in this review.

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January

19 Two SH-60B *Seahawks* from HSL-44 Det 4 completed the first fleet firing of the AGM-114 Hellfire missile. Crew members for Magnum 447 (shooter) were Lts. Paul Puopolo and Dab Kern and AW2 Ron Williams. Crew members for Magnum 444 (chase) were Lts. Steve Banta and Brian Gebo and AW2s Ty Hornbaker and Gerald Day.

22-28 Shuttle mission STS-89 with Naval Aviators/astronauts Marine Lt. Col. Terrence W. Wilcutt and Cdr. Joe Frank Edwards, Jr., serving respectively as mission commander and pilot aboard *Endeavour*, rendezvoused with the Russian space

station *Mir* to replace David Wolf with Andrew Thomas.

February

2 The Naval Air Systems Command's Logistic Policy, Processes and Maintenance Technology Department digitized and placed on CD-ROM the naval aviation maintenance instructions, thereby reducing the costs of printing and distribution as well as the manpower costs of required training and administration.

3 A Marine Corps EA-6B *Prowler* on a low-level training mission in the Italian Alps severed the cable of a ski gondola near Cavalese, Italy, killing all 20 occupants. Pilot Capt. Richard

J. Ashby and crew members Capts. Joseph P. Schweitzer, William J. Rancy II and Chandler P. Seagraves were assigned to VMAQ-2, MCAS Cherry Point, N.C.

20 The Navy ended its 42-year involvement in supporting Antarctic research and Operation Deep Freeze with the disestablishment of Naval Support Unit Antarctica. The mission was turned over to the 109th Mobility Air Wing of the New York Air National Guard. The Navy would continue to provide limited flight support to the United States Antarctic Program throughout the 1998-1999 austral research season.

20 Judge Robert Hodges of the U.S. Court of Federal Claims ruled

Opposite, *John C. Stennis* (CVN 74), with CVW-7 embarked, deployed to the Arabian Gulf in 1998. Photo by ©Antony Platt/Blue Thunder Pictures



PH2 Nova Harrington

the Navy liable for \$1.8 billion as the government, not the contractors, was responsible for canceling the Navy's program to build the A-12 aircraft. The decision is being appealed by the Navy.

March

2 Newport News Shipbuilding, Va., was awarded two contracts totaling \$30 million for advanced planning for the overhaul of *Enterprise* (CVN 65) and the overhaul and refueling of *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69).

3 Undergoing test and evaluation at NAS Patuxent River, Md., a V-22 *Osprey* flown by Marines Capt. William Witzig and Maj. Bill Wainwright made its first night flight utilizing night vision goggles.

5 Raytheon Aircraft

The crew of a VP-26 P-3 Orion watches a Maverick missile fired from their aircraft while on deployment to Sigonella, Italy, in July 1998.

Patrol Squadron Major Deployments, 1998

NAS Keflavik, Iceland/NS Roosevelt Roads, PR/Howard AFB, Panama

VP-10*	Aug 97–Feb 98
VP-16*	Feb 98–Aug 98
VP-8*	Aug 98–Feb 99

NAS Sigonella, Italy

VP-45	Aug 97–Feb 98
VP-26	Feb 98–Aug 98
VP-5	Aug 98–Feb 99

Diego Garcia, B.I.O.T. (Det at Bahrain and Al Masirah, Oman)

VP-47	Nov 97–Jun 98
VP-9	Jun 98–Dec 98
VP-4	Dec 98–Jun 99

NAF Misawa, Japan (Det at Kadena, Okinawa)

VP-1	Nov 97–Jun 98
VP-46	Jun 98–Dec 98
VP-40	Dec 98–Jun 99

Note: All squadrons fly the P-3C *Orion*.

*Squadron deploys concurrently to all three locations.

announced that the Navy and Air Force exercised a \$60 million option for the production of 22 T-6A *Texan IIs* for the Joint Primary Aircraft Training Program. The aircraft will be delivered in February 2000, bringing the total ordered to 46.

5 Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division, Patuxent River, Md., personnel coordinated the first test flight of the RQ-4A *Global Hawk* unmanned aerial vehicle, manufactured by Teledyne Ryan Aeronautical, at Edwards AFB, Calif.

5 SH-60B *Seahawk* crew members LCdr. Bocchicchio, Lt. Jason Burns and AW2 Ferninand Hollis assigned to HSL-44 Det 1 embarked on *Scott* (DDG 995) participated in the disruption of illegal narcotics trafficking by assisting in the cap-

ture of a 35-foot boat, four suspects and 57 bales of cocaine totaling 3,000 pounds.

12 Cdr. George W. Hoover, USN (Ret.), a space program pioneer and the innovator of numerous avionics devices that made the aircraft cockpit a more efficient control center, died at the age of 82. Hoover was a combat-tested pilot with over 5,000 hours in both fixed and rotary wing aircraft.

12 The Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Division at Patuxent River, Md., rolled out the first of nine OPT II *Pioneer Plus* unmanned aerial vehicles.

14 Capt. Duncan H. Read, USN (Ret.), Naval Aviator #145 who served during World War I and World War II (and one of four brothers, all Naval Aviators), died at the age of 101.

14 RAdm. John G. Wissler, USN (Ret.), a former test pilot and commanding officer of the Naval Air Test Center, VF-31, CVW-3 and NAS Cubi Point, R.P., died at the age of 71. RAdm. Wissler amassed over 5,000 hours in over 100 different aircraft.

25 Two SH-60B *Seahawks* from HSL-40, NS Mayport, Fla., successfully rescued six utility workers stranded on a 670-foot-high burning smoke stack at the Palatka Seminole Electric Plant, Palatka, Fla. Crew members of Airwolf 407 were Lts. Drew Krasny and Mark Murray, AW1 Andy Zawolik and AW2 Heath Rominger. The crew of Airwolf 403 included Lts. Billy Carter and Dana Gordon and AW2s Eric Kazmerchak and Scott West.

30 Reflecting a shift toward joint doctrine in the suppression of enemy air defense mission and the joint Navy/Air Force expeditionary squadrons, CNO approved the redesignation of all VAQ squadrons from Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadrons to Electronic Attack Squadrons.

30 Northrop Grumman was awarded a \$150 million contract to upgrade

Aviation Command Changes, 1998

Established

Naval Air Technical Data and Engineering Service Command	1 Oct 98
VFA-122 <i>Flying Eagles</i>	1 Oct 98

Deactivated

Naval Air Facility (NAF) Adak, AK	30 Jan 98
Naval Air Station (NAS) Memphis, TN	31 Jul 98
Naval Air Station (NAS) Dallas, TX	30 Sep 98
Naval Air Warfare Center Aircraft Division Trenton, NJ	30 Sep 98
Naval Air Engineering Service Unit, Philadelphia, PA	30 Sep 98
Naval Air Training Support Facility, Philadelphia, PA	30 Sep 98
Commander Tactical Air Group (COMTACGRU) 2	31 Oct 98
Naval Air Station (NAS) Norfolk, VA	24 Nov 98

Commissioned

<i>Harry S. Truman</i> (CVN 75)	25 Jul 98
<i>Bonhomme Richard</i> (LHD 6)	15 Aug 98

Decommissioned

<i>Guam</i> (LPH 9)	25 Aug 98
<i>Independence</i> (CV 62)	30 Sep 98

Redesignated

Electronic Combat Wing, U.S. Pacific Fleet to Electronic Attack Wing, U.S. Pacific Fleet	30 Mar 98
Tactical Electronic Warfare Squadrons (VAQ) to Electronic Attack Squadrons (VAQ)	30 Mar 98
Electronic Combat Weapons School to Electronic Attack Weapons School	30 Mar 98
Patrol Squadron Special Projects Unit (VPU) 1 to Special Projects Patrol Squadron (VPU) 1	8 Apr 98
Patrol Squadron Special Projects Unit (VPU) 2 to Special Projects Patrol Squadron (VPU) 2	14 Apr 98
Training Squadron (VT) 19 to Training Squadron (VT) 9	1 Oct 98
Naval Air Weapons Station (NAWS) Point Mugu, Calif., to Naval Air Station (NAS) Point Mugu	2 Dec 98

Note: The dates listed are official and may differ from those reported in earlier issues and from ceremonial dates.

the EA-6B *Prowler* with the next-generation configuration, Increased Capability III, to provide a reactive tactical jamming system to counter modern frequency-agile radars, as well as the addition of new displays, controls and software.

April

3 Upon completion of a six-month deployment, *George Washington* (CVN 73) disembarked its 26-person Marine Corps detachment, ending an era of a Marine Corps security

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presence on board carriers.

8 Boeing delivered the first production AGM-84H Standoff Land Attack Missile-Expanded Response to the Navy.

11 *Hawkeye 2000*, the fifth generation of the E-2C airborne early warning command and control aircraft, completed its first flight at Northrop Grumman's St. Augustine, Fla., manufacturing facility. *Hawkeye 2000* integrates improvements to the mission computer, advanced control indicator set workstations, integrated satellite communications and an advanced equipment cooling system.

15 In preparation for taking over duties as the permanently forward-deployed carrier, *Kitty Hawk* (CV 63) returned to NAS North Island, Calif., after completing a three-month overhaul at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, Wash. The yard period included refurbishing the ship's four propellers and shafts, repainting the hull and replacing the rudders with reconditioned ones taken from the decommissioned aircraft carrier *Ranger* (CV 61).

17 Apr–3 May Shuttle mission STS-90, with Naval Aviators/astronauts LCdr. Scott Altman and Cdr. Kathryn Hire serving respectively as pilot and mission specialist aboard *Columbia*, conducted micro-gravity research in the last Spacelab mission and examined the challenges of space flight to the neurological system in NeuroLab.

May

The crew of *Reid* (FFG 30) seized 1.5 tons of cocaine through the combined efforts of an HSL-84 helo, a shore-based P-3C *Orion* and a Coast Guard law enforcement detachment. During routine flight operations, the SH-2G *Seasprite* and P-3C crew discovered a suspicious vessel and determined it to be a potential refueling platform for drug smugglers. As *Reid* approached, another vessel was detected and the helo launched to

pursue it. This boat eventually escaped to foreign territorial waters after dumping 36 bales of cocaine.

3 Capt. Walter T. Laws, USN (Ret.), former CO of VA-22 and CVW-11, died at the age of 73 in Alexandria, Va.

4 Cdr. Robert C. Weekly, USN (Ret.), a survivor of the sinking of *Princeton* (CVL 23) during the Battle of Leyte Gulf, died at the age of 77 in McLean, Va.

9 Col. Donald Conroy, USMC (Ret.), a Marine Corps aviator for 33 years, died from colon cancer at the age of 77. He flew dive-bomber missions during WW II, served with the "Black Sheep" squadron during the Korean War, VMA-331 during the



An HSL-84 SH-2G *Seasprite* assisted in the seizure of 1.5 tons of cocaine in May 1998.

Cuban Missile Crisis, and served two tours in Vietnam. Col. Conroy was also made famous by the book *The Great Santini*, written by his son, Pat Conroy, and the movie of the same title.

12 Secretary of Defense William Cohen announced that the president nominated RAdm. Dennis V. McGinn, Director, Air Warfare Division (N88) for appointment to Commander Third Fleet as a vice admiral.

13–14 The Navy sponsored a demonstration of prototype CL-327 *Guardian* and Bell Helicopter *Eagle Eye* unmanned aerial vehicles, both capable of vertical takeoff and landing, for more than 20 representatives of military forces from seven nations.

18 The Navy announced the relocation of all East Coast F/A-18 squadrons from NAS Cecil Field, Fla.

Nine fleet squadrons and the fleet readiness squadron (FRS) will go to NAS Oceana, Va., and two fleet squadrons to MCAS Beaufort, S.C. All fleet squadrons and the FRS are expected to have completed their moves by October 1999.

19 *Yorktown* (CV 5), which sank 56 years ago on 7 June 1942 following the Battle of Midway, was located on the bottom of the Pacific Ocean at 16,650 feet by a search team headed by Dr. Robert Ballard aboard the deep submergence support ship *Laney Chouest*.

21 Raytheon Systems Company was awarded a \$29.2 million contract to modify three E-6A *Mercury* aircraft to the E-6B configuration and produce two additional aircraft and trainer modification kits.

22 Raytheon Systems Company announced two contract awards totaling \$38.2 million for work related to the U.S. Navy's P-3C *Orion*.

26 Secretary of the Navy John Dalton approved the transfer of *Hornet* (CV 12) to the Aircraft Carrier Hornet Foundation, Alameda, Calif.

Following her restoration, the foundation was to open the Hornet Memorial Museum in August 1998.

26 *Nimitz* (CVN 68) entered dry-dock at Newport News Shipbuilding, Va., to commence a 33-month refueling and complex overhaul. Commissioned in 1975, *Nimitz* is the first of 10 aircraft carriers in its class to undergo this 33-month process.

June

VP-9 deployed with the first operational P-3C *Orion* Anti-Surface Improvement Program aircraft—outfitted with a wide variety of sensors, an advanced optical system, improved electronic surveillance measures and advanced communications abilities that will enable the crew to provide detailed tactical information.

Carrier and Air Wing Deployments, 1998

Nimitz (CVN 68)

CVW-9 (Tail Code: NG)
WestPac/Indian Ocean
1 Sep 97-1 Mar 98

Squadrons	Aircraft
VF-211***	F-14A
VFA-146	F/A-18C
VFA-147	F/A-18C
VMFA-314 (VW)**	F/A-18C
VAW-112	E-2C
VAQ-138	EA-6B
VQ-5 Det D	ES-3A
VRC-30 Det 4	C-2A
VS-33	S-3B
HS-8	SH/HH-60F/H

George Washington (CVN 73)

CVW-1 (Tail Code: AB)
Med/Arabian Gulf
3 Oct 97-3 Apr 98

Squadrons	Aircraft
VF-102***	F-14B
VFA-82	F/A-18C
VFA-86	F/A-18C
VMFA-251 (DW)**	F/A-18C
VAW-123	E-2C
VAQ-137	EA-6B
VQ-6 Det B	ES-3A
VRC-40 Det 1	C-2A
VS-32	S-3B
HS-11	SH/HH-60F/H

Independence (CV 62)*

CVW-5 (Tail Code: NF)
Contingency Operations
23 Jan 98-6 Jun 98

Squadrons	Aircraft
VF-154***	F-14A
VFA-27	F/A-18C
VFA-192	F/A-18C
VFA-195	F/A-18C
VAW-115	E-2C
VAQ-136	EA-6B
VQ-5 Det 5	ES-3A
VRC-30 Det 5	C-2A
VS-21	S-3B
HS-14	HH/SH-60F/H

John C. Stennis (CVN 74)

CVW-7 (Tail Code: AG)
Med/Arabian Gulf/WestPac
26 Feb 98-26 Aug 98

Squadrons	Aircraft
VF-11***	F-14B



PH2 Michael W. Pondergrass

In addition to Operation Southern Watch duties, **Enterprise (CVN 65)** and **CVW-3** spearheaded Operation Desert Fox in December 1998.

VF-143***	F-14B
VFA-131	F/A-18C
VFA-136	F/A-18C
VAW-121	E-2C
VAQ-140	EA-6B
VQ-6 Det C	ES-3A
VRC-40 Det 2	C-2A
VS-31	S-3B
HS-5	HH/SH-60F/H

Dwight D. Eisenhower (CVN 69)

CVW-17 (Tail Code: AA)
Med/Adriatic Sea/Arabian Gulf
10 Jun 98-10 Dec 98

Squadrons	Aircraft
VF-103***	F-14B
VFA-34	F/A-18C
VFA-81	F/A-18C
VFA-83	F/A-18C
VAW-125	E-2C
VAQ-132	EA-6B
VQ-6 Det D	ES-3A
VRC-40 Det 3	C-2A
VS-30	S-3B
HS-15	HH/SH-60F/H

Abraham Lincoln (CVN 72)

CVW-14 (Tail Code: NK)
WestPac/Indian Ocean/Arabian Gulf
11 Jun 98-7 Dec 98

Squadrons	Aircraft
VF-31***	F-14D
VFA-25	F/A-18C
VFA-113	F/A-18C
VFA-115	F/A-18C
VAW-113	E-2C
VAQ-139	EA-6B
VQ-5 Det B	ES-3A
VRC-30 Det 1	C-2A
VS-35	S-3B
HS-4	HH/SH-60F/H

Enterprise (CVN 65)

CVW-3 (Tail Code: AC)
Med/Arabian Gulf/Adriatic Sea
6 Nov 98-6 May 99

Squadrons	Aircraft
VF-32***	F-14B
VFA-37	F/A-18C
VFA-105	F/A-18C
VMFA-312 (DR)**	F/A-18C
VAW-126	E-2C
VAQ-130	EA-6B
VQ-6 Det A	ES-3A
VRC-40 Det 4	C-2A
VS-22	S-3B
HS-7	HH/SH-60F/H

Carl Vinson (CVN 70)

CVW-11 (Tail Code: NH)
WestPac
6 Nov 98-6 May 99

Squadron	Aircraft
VF-213***	F-14D
VFA-22	F/A-18C
VFA-94	F/A-18C
VFA-97	F/A-18A
VAW-117	E-2C
VAQ-135	EA-6B
VQ-5 Det C	ES-3A
VRC-30 Det 2	C-2A
VS-29	S-3B
HS-6	HH/SH-60F/H

* *Independence* was forward deployed in Yokosuka, Japan, from 1991 to 1998. *Kitty Hawk* assumed forward-deployed duties in July 1998 and operates from her home port in Yokosuka.

** While on deployment, VMFA squadrons take on the tail code of the air wing. Their original tail codes are noted in parentheses.

*** All deployed F-14 squadrons are equipped with the Tactical Air Reconnaissance Pod System and Low Altitude Navigation and Targeting Infrared for Night.