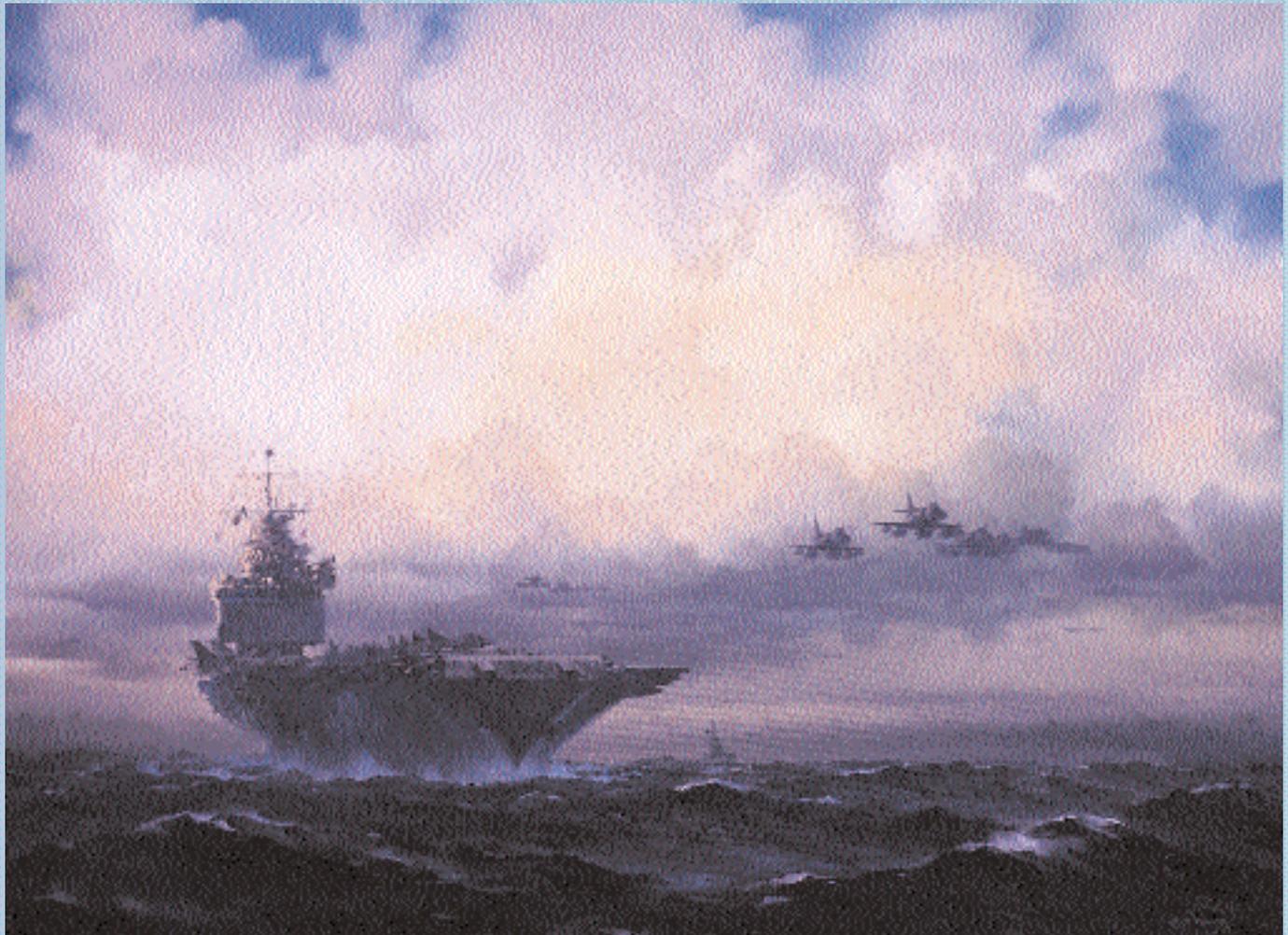
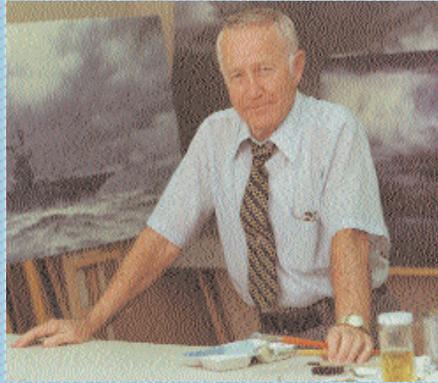


AIR & SPACE MUSEUM SHOWCASES R. G. SMITH

By JOSN Amy L. Pittmann



The National Air and Space Museum unveiled an aviation art exhibition by award-winning artist Robert Grant “R. G.” Smith on 24 March, to continue through 5 September. Smith’s collection, entitled “The Old Master of the Sky,” illustrates the evolution of flight for military and commercial aircraft and spacecraft.

Smith is best known as an artist of Naval Aviation, and his two tours as a combat artist in Vietnam and trips to naval units around the world led to his distinction as an Honorary Naval Aviator. His career began in 1936 as an engineer with Douglas Aircraft, where he helped design naval aircraft such as the SBD *Dauntless*, AD *Skyraider*, A3D *Skywarrior*, F4D *Skyray* and the A4D *Skyhawk*. At the same time, Smith also developed a reputation as an artist, using his knowledge of airplane construction and function to give life to his artwork.

Throughout his career, Smith received several awards for his art, including the Salmagundi Club’s Louis E. Seley Award, the Fighting Hawk Award, the American Society of Aviation Artists Franklin Mint Award and the U.S. Naval Institute Award of

Merit. In 1979, the Navy’s Flight Demonstration Squadron named him an Honorary Blue Angel, and in 1994 he became the first recipient of the R. G. Smith Award for Excellence in Naval Aviation Art—named in his honor by the National Museum of Naval Aviation in Pensacola, Fla.



The Naval Historical Center loaned four paintings from the Navy Art Collection for the exhibition: “Enterprise on Yankee Station,” “Activity at Subic Bay,” “Launch” and “Special Delivery.”



PH-2 David B. Loveall

“Seeing combat firsthand, traveling and working side by side with the troops, feeling the pressures that fighting men feel—they brought everything together and added a new dimension to my art.”



Mark Avino

Above, Jack Dailey, Director of the National Air and Space Museum, and wife Mimi (left) speak with aviation artist Hank Caruso and wife Amy. Right, retired VAdm. William B. Houser poses with R. G. Smith’s daughter, Sharlyn Marsh, during the museum’s opening of her father’s aviation art exhibit.

Above, photography, personal experience and an understanding of aerodynamics aided Smith in his quest for accuracy in art. Facing page: top, the artist in his studio; bottom, R. G.’s painting “Enterprise on Yankee Station” captures the power and majesty of sea, sky and carrier aviation.



Mark Avino