



# The Year in Review 1999

By William T. Baker and Mark L. Evans

**T**hroughout 1999, Naval Aviation responded to continual crises around the globe, maintaining constant vigilance during extended deployments. Carrier battle groups led by *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70), *Constellation* (CV 64), *Enterprise* (CVN 65), *John F. Kennedy* (CVN 67), *Kitty Hawk* (CV 63) and *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71), supported by land-based squadrons and detachments, proved crucial to the resolution of the fighting in Kosovo, Iraq and East Timor. In addition, thousands of victims of natural disasters were rescued by humanitarian relief efforts, Naval Aviators supported the exploration of space, and counter-drug operations put the

bite on criminal drug activities.

The successful completion of its operational evaluation gave the F/A-18E/F *Super Hornet* the green light for introduction to the fleet, while ongoing testing with the MV-22 *Osprey* moved it one step closer to fleet acceptance. Keeping pace with the *Super Hornet's* progress, VFA-122 celebrated its establishment as the F/A-18E/F fleet readiness squadron, nicknamed *Flying Eagles*, and received its initial aircraft.

Exciting milestones included the first combat



launch of the AGM-154A Joint Standoff Weapon, delivery of the first Combined Engagement Capability/*Hawkeye* 2000-equipped NP-3D *Orion*, the initial live fire of the AIM-9X *Sidewinder*; operational deployment of the Antisurface Warfare Improvement Program-modified P-3C *Orion*, rollout of the upgraded SH-60R and a joint Navy and Coast Guard venture that took the CL-327 *Guardian* vertical takeoff and landing tactical unmanned aerial vehicle to sea.

Concern over extended deployments led to additional pay and lifestyle reforms, including the experimental expansion of duty sections from 8 to 10

aboard *Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71). Reflecting changing mission requirements, S-3 *Vikings* bid farewell to aviation warfare systems operator-rated sensor operators; Training Squadron 7 retired the last TA-4J *Skyhawks* in the training command; and the disestablishment of Antarctic Development Squadron 6 marked the end of 44 years of the Navy's support for the Antarctic program.

Naval Aviation finished the century continuing its tradition of pushing the envelope.

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The bow of the mighty *Constellation* (CV 64) slices through the blue Pacific in this stunning photo by David Peters.

# The Year in Review

## January

**2** Newport News Shipbuilding, Va., reported that construction of the next *Nimitz*-class carrier, *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76), was 45 percent complete.

**2** The *Enterprise* (CVN 65) battle group departed the Arabian Gulf for the Mediterranean, leaving the *Carl Vinson* (CVN 70) battle group on station in the gulf.

**5** In a brisk dogfight over Iraq, Navy and Air Force aircraft fired a total of six missiles against Iraqi MiG-25 *Foxbats* that were in violation of the no-fly zone; however, none of the missiles hit their targets.

**6** Newport News Shipbuilding, Va., was awarded a \$22 million contract modification for advanced planning and material procurement for the extended selected restrictive availability for *Enterprise* (CVN 65).

**8** Northrop Grumman Corp. received a \$6.1 million contract modification for the development of a generic acoustic stimulation system for Navy trainers in support of antisubmarine warfare missions.

**11–15** During Missilex 99-1 off

southern California, SH-60B *Seahawks* from HSLs 41, 43, 45 and 49 fired AGM-114 Hellfire missiles, further validating the armed helo concept. Support was also provided by S-3 *Vikings* from VS-33, while F/A-18A/B *Hornets* from the Naval Strike and Air Warfare Center, NAS Fallon, Nev., dropped eight GBU-12 laser-guided bombs. In addition, the Light Airborne Multipurpose System was used for the first time as an airborne maritime air controller.

**14** The engineering and manufacturing development MV-22 *Osprey* #10 began initial sea trials aboard *Saipan* (LHA 2) and *Tortuga* (LSD 46), which extended through 8 February.

**25** The first operational launch of the AGM-154A Joint Standoff Weapon was conducted successfully by *Hornets* from VFAs 22 and 94 (both from CVW-11) against Iraqi military targets during Operation Southern Watch.

## February

**5** HSL-46's Det 9 completed a special counter-drug deployment

aboard *Ticonderoga* (CG 47) in the Caribbean. The detachment flew over 630 hours (60 percent of them during nighttime conditions) and successfully interdicted six drug shipments.

**8–22** BuNos 158650 and 159911, the first of a planned fleet of 123 EA-6B *Prowlers* to be equipped with the Structural Data Recording System (SDRS), were reconfigured by VAQ-129 at NAS Whidbey Island, Wash. The SDRS replaced the previous Counting Accelerometer Group to provide increased reliability in engineering aircraft assessment.

**16** Newport News Shipbuilding, Va., announced receipt of a \$170 million Navy contract toward continued preparation for the refueling of *Dwight D. Eisenhower* (CVN 69), scheduled for 2000 as the carrier's single refueling during her anticipated 50-year service.

**24** Three LC-130R *Hercules* from VXE-6 returned to NAS Point Mugu, Calif., after completing their four-month deployment to Antarctica during Operation Deep Freeze 1998–1999. This marked the end of VXE-6's support to the Antarctic program sponsored by the





PH2 Michael W. Pendergrass

National Science Foundation. Among the squadron's historical milestones were the first landing at the South Pole in 1956 (R4D *Que Sera Sera*), the first dirt landing in Antarctica, the first rescue flight from Deep Freeze and the first all-female crew to fly the LC-130 in October 1991. Twenty-five Navy personnel and one Marine died during the squadron's 44 years of operations.

**26** General Atomics of San Diego, Calif., was awarded an \$11.8 million contract to conduct a feasibility study for an advanced aircraft recovery system based on electric motors to be completed by March 2002.

### March

*Carl Vinson* (CVN 70) departed the Arabian Gulf following relief by *Enterprise* (CVN 65).

**3-14** The *Super Hornet* completed its second round of sea trials aboard *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75) during the carrier's sea trials off Virginia. The *Super Hornet* team—Capt. Robert O. Wirt, Jr.;

**Above, as the sun sets over the Arabian Gulf, an S-3B Viking from the VS-22 Checkmates makes a low pass near Enterprise (CVN 65). Opposite, the MV-22 Osprey demonstrates its slow flying capabilities.**

LCdrs. Mike Wallace, Tim Baker and Lance Floyd; Maj. Matt Shihadeh, USMC; and Lts. Alan D. Armstrong, Klas W. Ohman and Erik O. Etz—flew F/A-18s F1 and F2.

**5** The T-45A *Goshawk* fleet at NAS Kingsville, Texas, passed its 200,000th flight hour.

**9** Ground was broken at the Virginia Advanced Shipbuilding and Carrier Integration Center, Newport News, Va. The center was envisioned as the focal point for the integration of systems and the application of emerging technology into future aircraft carriers.

**10** VC-6's *Pioneer* unmanned aerial vehicle detachment completed a four-week deployment to NAF El Centro, Calif., in support of counter-narcotics Operation Alliance. Flying

32 sorties, Det A totaled 101.3 hours utilizing the forward-looking infrared-equipped *Pioneer* to apprehend 438 suspected drug traffickers/illegal aliens and narcotics valued at \$8.9 million.

**11** The Navy accepted delivery of its first Combined Engagement Capability/*Hawkeye* 2000-equipped NP-3D *Orion*. The aircraft was developed to enhance airborne surveillance command and control through improved electronic warfare and electro-optics capabilities.

**17** Remains returned from Vietnam were identified as those of Cdr. John C. Mape and Petty Officer 2nd Class John F. Hartzheim. Mape was lost on 13 April 1966 when his A-1H *Skyraider* was shot down by a surface-to-air missile over Nghe Tinh Province, North Vietnam. Hartzheim was lost on 27 February 1968 when his OP-2E *Neptune* was struck by anti-aircraft fire over Khammouan Province, Laos.

**20** Adm. Roy Lee Johnson died of respiratory failure in Virginia Beach, Va. During WW II Johnson served as an air group commander, air officer and finally executive



### Patrol Squadron Major Deployments, 1999

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

VP-8	Aug 98–Feb 99
VP-45	Feb 99–Aug 99
VP-26	Aug 99–Feb 00

#### NAS Sigonella, Italy

VP-5	Aug 98–Feb 99
VP-10	Feb 99–Aug 99
VP-16	Aug 99–Feb 00

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

VP-4	Dec 98–Jun 99
VP-1	Jun 99–Dec 99
VP-46	Dec 99–Jun 00

#### NAF Misawa, Japan (Det at Kadena, Okinawa)

VP-40	Dec 98–Jun 99
VP-47	Jun 99–Dec 99
VP-9	Dec 99–Jun 00

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

\* Squadrons deployed concurrently to all three locations—with the exception of Panama, from which all military forces were withdrawn effective 31 December 1999.

JOL Joshua M. Hudson

**True to his breed, P-3C flight engineer AD2 Jerry Jordan demonstrates the mindset of flight engineers—all-seeing and primed to respond in case of emergency while flying demanding missions worldwide.**

officer aboard *Hornet* (CV 12). Adm. Johnson commanded *Badoeng Strait* (CVE 116) in the Korean War, taught at the National War College, and was Commander in Chief, U.S. Pacific Fleet during the Gulf of Tonkin Incident in August 1964. Following his retirement he was president of the “Golden Eagles” from 1980 to 1981, as well as the Naval Academy Alumni Association.

**22** *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75) arrived at Newport News Shipbuilding, Va., for a five-month post-shakedown availability period focused on improvements to information technology and combat systems.

**24** With the collapse of diplomatic efforts to counter Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic’s “cleansing” of ethnic Albanians from Kosovo, NATO began Operation Allied Force, an air

campaign to reduce Milosevic’s ability to sustain operations. Naval Aviation’s contribution included electronic attack, strike warfare, humanitarian operations and the deployment of peacekeeping forces. Sixth Fleet ships were supported by land-based EA-6B *Prowlers*, EP-3E *Aries IIs*, F/A-18D *Hornets* and P-3C *Orions*, as well as *Predator* unmanned aerial vehicles equipped with sophisticated cameras and the ability to operate in high-risk environments that imperiled manned aircraft. The Joint Direct Attack Munition was operationally delivered for the first time over Serbian targets, while five Antisurface Warfare Improvement Program-modified *Orions* from VP-5 with Synthetic Aperture Radar and ATM-84E Standoff Land Attack Missiles helped eliminate any threat from the Yugoslav navy.

**24** VS-31 bid farewell to the last aviation warfare systems operator-rated sensor operators as they were removed from the S-3 *Viking*’s mission requirements and transferred to other aircraft types.

**26** The Navy released plans to select 12 Limited Duty Officers and Chief Warrant Officers as Naval Flight Officers (NFO). One new NFO was scheduled to be assigned to each patrol squadron, with periodic selection boards held to determine their replacements as needed.

**27** While on a nighttime mission over Kosovo, an Air Force F-117A *Nighthawk* stealth fighter was shot down by what was believed to be an SA-3 surface-to-air missile. VAQ-134 assisted with the pilot’s rescue, neutralizing Yugoslav air defenses by jamming and employing AGM-88 High-speed Anti-Radiation Missiles.

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