

U.S. Naval Air Reserve

Volume Three of a Commemorative Collection

*Diamond
Anniversary* **75** *th
Year of
Naval
Aviation*

U.S. Naval Air Reserve

Edited by Commander Peter Mersky, USNR-R

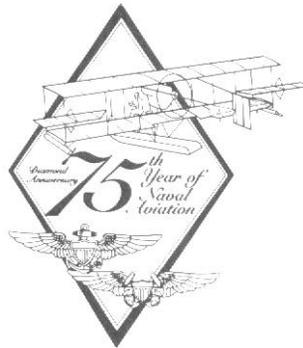
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Introduction

August 29, 1986, marked the 70th anniversary of the U.S. Naval Air Reserve. On that day in 1916, the Naval Appropriations Act for fiscal year 1917 provided funds for the establishment of a naval flying corps and the purchase of 12 planes for the naval militia. Personnel for these units were drawn from various college flying clubs, the most prominent from Yale, organized by F. Trubee Davison. An energetic individual, Davison found 12 classmates, borrowed a Curtiss seaplane from the wealthy Wanamaker family in Philadelphia, and set about teaching himself and his club to fly.

From these humble beginnings, the U.S. Naval Air Reserve grew into today's massive organization — a navy within a navy — with bases across the country and 52 squadrons, 357 aircraft and 34,350 full-time active duty and part-time reserve personnel. Traditionally considered a hand-me-down collection of planes and equipment, the Naval Air Reserve is currently enjoying one of the most dramatic revitalizations in its 70-year history. Factory-fresh McDonnell Douglas F/A-18A Hornets are joining the light attack inventory, in company with Grumman F-14A Tomcats and upgraded Lockheed P-3B Orions. And there are plans for more modern aircraft in the latter part of the decade.

Being a reservist has always signified additional dedication for the civilian sailor. There are many reasons why people join the reserves, but the air reserve program offers more tangible benefits and demands greater commitment in time and involvement. Perhaps the most important reason is the chance to remain a part of Naval Aviation. The road to the coveted Wings of Gold is long and hard and, even after the trials and tribulations of an initial tour, it is difficult to give up the wings. Most Naval Aviators who leave active duty after a few years join the reserves and manage to affiliate with a unit, serving a few years to see how they like it.

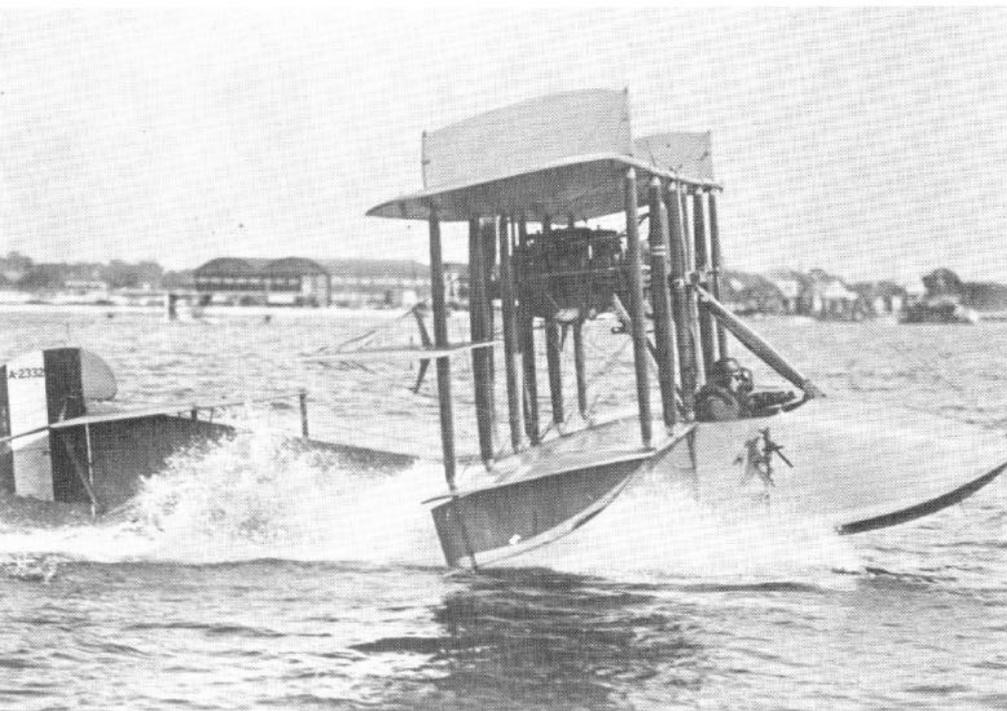
They often find many of the same frustrations, as well as many of the perks found in the fleet. This discovery drives some out of the Navy, but for many more it leads to the decision to remain in the reserves.

There's also the satisfaction — and undeniable patriotism — of continuing to serve one's country, as well as maintaining readiness skills. We know that any potential aggressor considers America's reserve strength when plotting international strategy.

America needs a strong reserve, in all services. And the Naval Air Reserve has a well-documented history of contributions to many of this country's finest moments.

U.S. NAVAL AIR RESERVE

By Commander Peter Mersky, USNR-R



The F-boat, a two-place plane, became a familiar sight in Pensacola during the early days of Naval Aviation. Note the bombsight, a simple gadget, placed at the right of the plane.

I. The Beginning

Powered flight was barely a decade old, and the war in Europe had been going on for two years. These two occasions combined to help form the U. S. Naval Reserve. Aviation had proved to be an irresistible draw for young men eager to find their way overseas, even if their own country was trying her best to remain neutral. Many men of college age enlisted in the British or French armies, and saw a great deal of action in the early land battles. However, as the airplane became a more common sight in the

skies over the battlefields, those youngsters who had not lost their initial idealism and saw further adventure in the air transferred to their host country's air services, and continued the fight mounted in Nieuports, Spads and SE-5s.

While some of their countrymen had made it over "over there," other groups of American collegemen decided to make a more formal attempt to get into the war as American units. The Navy had created a so-called Naval Militia in 1915, adding an "aeronautical service," although there were no funds, aircraft or training fields to service this add-on. By 1916, the Naval Reserve Aviation component had evolved into a loose organization of 10 state-run militia units made up of aviation enthusiasts looking for adventure and flight time. To get started, units borrowed aircraft from any available source. Glenn Curtiss, who sold the Navy its first aircraft — the Triad — in 1911, offered airplanes at reduced prices, including instruction of one pilot per militia unit free of charge.

When the appropriations act of 1916 established both a Naval Flying Corps and a Naval Reserve Flying Corps (NRFC), the militia enthusiasts were urged to join either the regulars or the reserves to receive training. The sum of one million dollars was set aside for the aeronautical organization. At that time the Navy had six airplanes, two were assigned to the battleship USS *North Carolina* and four were assigned to the Naval Aeronautic Station, Pensacola, Fla. The act limited the number of persons to serve in the aeronautical organization to a total of not more than 48 officers, and 96 men, plus not more than 12 Marine officers and 24 enlisted men. Thus, by the time the U.S. declared war on the Central Powers on April 6, 1917, the total manpower assigned to Naval Aviation consisted of 48 officers, including six Marines, and 239 enlisted men.

Establishment of the Naval Reserve Flying Corps in 1916 had prompted students in several colleges to start "flying units." The threat of war with Mexico — due to an increasing number of border incidents involving such colorful bandits as Pancho Villa — caused college men to wonder how they could serve their country. Flying had the greatest appeal.

As a result of the Naval Appropriations

Act of August 29, 1916 — hereafter considered the birthday of the Naval Air Reserve — a Naval Flying Corps and a Naval Reserve Force, including a Naval Reserve Flying Corps, were established.

Three units of civilian volunteers were formed at Huntington, N.Y.; Buffalo, N.Y.; and Newport News, Va. The First Yale Unit, led by F. Trubee Davison, is the most famous of these early groups. (Some sources list June 1916, as the Yale Group's date of formation.) Davison, a sophomore, managed to find one Curtiss F seaplane, loaned by Rodman Wanamaker, along with the plane's pilot, David McCulloch as the sole instructor. The group of 12 Yale undergraduates learned to fly during the summer months and, by September, were proficient enough to take part in maneuvers off Sandy Hook, N.J., Davison said:

"This work was important in several respects: it demonstrated the value of airplanes in locating hostile ships; it proved that they could be located far more efficiently with seaplanes than surface craft; and it showed the Navy that civilians were not only interested in developing the aviation part of naval warfare, but were devoting our time and energy to that end."

That fall, two more flying boats were added to the unit's flight line, gifts from Davison's father, H. P. Davison, a partner in the J. P. Morgan financial firm. To be nearer Yale during the fall semester, the unit moved its aircraft to the New London, Conn., submarine base and flew from the Thames River until snow and ice stopped them.

Previously, Lieutenant John Towers, one of the Navy's first aviators, had gotten Davison and his group to join the new Naval Reserve Flying Corps and, on March 24, 1917, 13 days before America's entry in the war, the Yale Unit volunteers enlisted en masse. By June, the Yale Unit had moved to Huntington, Long Island, N.Y., and had accumulated considerable flight time. The unit had been assigned the responsibility of coastal patrol against German submarines.

Before the end of June, the expansion of air training showed that pilot training had commenced for 25 men each at Squantum and Bay Shore, Mass.; 20 at Newport News, Va.; 27 at Huntington; and 20 each at Akron and Camp Borden,

Ohio. These were in addition to the 15 at Pensacola, Fla., the Navy's primary flight training base. Planes were in short supply and there were mounting technical problems in the industry, both in the manufacturing of engines and in the matter of patents relating to airplanes.

As American involvement gathered momentum, members of the college flying groups were split up and sent where their expertise was needed. In August, two members of the Yale Unit were ordered to France, the first Naval Reserve Flying Corps members to go to Europe. Training centers opened at bases

including 2,000 aviators, and built its enlisted strength to 30,000.

While early arrivals in Europe had to fly foreign-built aircraft, out of necessity, the American aircraft industry in one year developed its production capacity and furnished more than 200 seaplanes and landplanes.

The bulk of these aviators were reservists. The early regulars who had completed flight training were needed in the fleet to man the battleships and to take charge of the airfields that sprang up to train the new NRFC arrivals. Lieutenant Marc Mitscher, Naval Aviator #33, for example, became the



The F/A-18 Hornet, pictured here carrying bombs and missiles, began to augment the Naval Air Reserve on October 19, 1986.

of the Naval Militia at Squantum and Bay Shore, Mass. Base expansion located patrol stations along the Atlantic Coast, from Chatham, on the "elbow" of Cape Cod, to Key West, Fla., and soon spread south to Coco Solo, and north to Halifax, Nova Scotia. Princeton's unit was in training in Toronto, Ontario, with one of its members, James Forrestal, slated to be designated as Naval Aviator 154 and, still later, to become the first Secretary of Defense.

In the 19 months between the declaration of war and the armistice on November 11, 1918, the Navy trained more than 6,000 aviation specialists,

commanding officer of the air stations at Rockaway, N.Y., and Miami, Fla. Lieutenant P. N. L. Bellingier, Naval Aviator #8, took charge of training at Hampton Roads, Va. Thus, most of the Naval Aviators which got into combat in Europe came from the ranks of the NRFC. In 18 months, the Navy's flying forces, assigned to 20 bases abroad, attacked or sank 12 submarines, flew almost 2.5-million miles of coastal patrol, dropped

more than 100,000 pounds of bombs on submarine pens and bases, and commenced making landplane bombing attacks on non-Navy targets inland.

Several naval reservists laid claim to important "firsts." Lieutenant H. T. Stanley was the first Naval Aviator to be credited with the destruction of a German submarine. Ensign Stephen Potter was the first Navy pilot to score a kill in the air. And perhaps the best known individual of the First Yale Unit, Lt. David S. Ingalls, became the Navy's first ace, shooting down four German aircraft and at least one German observation balloon while flying exchange duty with British Fighter Squadron No. 213. Reserve Ensign Charles H. Hammann was the only U. S. Navy pilot to be awarded the Medal of Honor during WW I for a daring rescue under fire.

With the armistice, most of the Navy's reservists returned to civilian life. Naval Aviation had a strength of 37,407, of which 82 percent was made up of reservists.

For his part in forming the First Yale Unit, F. Trubee Davison was awarded the Navy Cross. Unfortunately, Davison did not complete flight training, due to a crash and serious back injuries. He recuperated for six months and saw limited service as a junior officer during the war. However, in 1966, on the 50th Anniversary of the Naval Air Reserve, in special ceremonies at Davison's New York estate, Vice Admiral Paul H. Ramsey, then DCNO(Air), pinned a set of gold wings on Davison and designated him an "Honorary Naval Aviator."

II. Lean Years, The 1920s

As one writer noted, "The last chorus of "Over There" faded into the din of the victory cheers, and Americans did not recognize their new heritage of international responsibility — they sought a rapid return to prewar isolation. Mass demobilization was what the nation wanted...."It was true. As with any war, the civilian population demanded a return to "normalcy." and quickly dismantled the huge war-making apparatus they had created. In victory, they defeated the very organization which had given them superiority. And, as in most wars, the members of the services who were not "career-oriented" — the reservists — got out as soon as

they could. The result was a crushing deflation of America's armed forces in all branches, including the Navy's air arm which had just begun to function as an operational force.

By 1920, only a comparatively small group of reserve officers remained on active duty. Most of these took examinations for the regular Navy and, by 1922, the Naval Reserve Flying Corps was completely inactive. Funds were provided in 1920 for 15 day training periods at Rockaway Beach, N.Y., for a limited number of officers of Class Five. However, due to lack of funds, this opportunity was not offered again to reserve aviators and, subsequently, all Class Five students were transferred to Class Six of the Volunteer Naval Reserve Force. Due to the fact that provision for actual flying was no longer made in the Naval Reserve, hundreds of aviation officers failed to reenroll at the completion of their first four years and left the Naval Reserve Force.

In 1920, a chance to stay with the active forces for one year without giving up the reserve status was offered to enlisted members. Written by the Commandant of the Seventh Naval District, dated July 6, 1920, the letter noted, in part:

"This is just what many of the Reservists have desired, that is, active service in the Reserve Force without transfer to Regular Navy and an opportunity to be confirmed and advanced in rating under full pay and regular service conditions."

Attention was given — or at least attempted to be given — to the training of aviation reservists. In a letter of June 12, 1920, the Commandant of the 8th Naval District made this notation: "The training of qualified Naval Aviators on inactive duty can be given on this station anytime between July 1st and September 30." But it was not enough and, by 1923, the entire Naval Reserve program, including the aviation reserves, was in a decline. Since most NFRC members signed up for four-year terms, the crucial years for the reserve forces were 1921 and 1922. Although a few reserves were given refresher cruises and training in 1920, there was no money allotted for training in 1921. Interest waned and, by 1922, the reserve aviation force was virtually nonexistent.

Interest among the WW I aviators,

however, remained high and individual cities asked for activation of air bases for reserve flying. New York City, in 1923, had a group of policemen who were also members of the NRFC. They were attached to the Fifth Division, Sixth Battalion, New York Aerial Police at Fort Hamilton. The group received support from the city and public subscription. Four Curtiss N-9 floatplanes were given to the unit by the Navy in 1923.

In addition to activities in New York, two major reserve bases were established at this time, at Anacostia, Washington, D.C., and Squantum, in Boston Harbor. Planning for Anacostia actually began in 1917, and authorization for the establishment of "an airplane landing site" was given in November 1917. "The area of Anacostia Flats in the District of Columbia" was selected as the likely spot. The initial financial allocation was \$500 to be used for construction of shacks and a hangar. An additional \$30,000 was later given for the construction of additional buildings and runways.

The field was opened on January 1, 1919, with Lieutenant W. E. Doherty in charge. Anacostia soon became a hub of reserve flying activity, and its proximity to the nation's capital certainly did not hinder its growth. The air station at the fork of the Anacostia and Potomac Rivers featured many unique installations, including a school for quartermasters who specialized in handling pigeons for message-carrying purposes, and radio testing facilities.

Anacostia continued its period of service until September 30, 1961, when most flying activities came to an end, and moved to new facilities at Naval Air Facility, Washington, D.C., situated on Andrews Air Force Base, Md.

The base at Squantum, Mass., was originally established as a seaplane base in 1917, commanded by Lieutenant Junior Grade E. W. Spencer. For a time, the Bethlehem Steel Company manufactured destroyers there for use against the German U-boat threat. After the war, it was proposed to place a Naval Aviation Reserve facility at the dormant Squantum base. The main thrust of the argument by war-trained Naval Aviators was to take advantage of the training they had received, which now was not being used. In 1923, the group found a spokesman in then-Lieutenant Richard

E. Byrd, later of Arctic exploration fame. Byrd obtained permission from the Bureau of Aeronautics to use the old facilities at Squantum and, in 1924, Naval Reserve Air Base (NRAB), Squantum opened, with Lieutenant George Pond as C.O.

NRAB Squantum became a mainstay for the Naval Air Reserves in the New

England area as well as serving as a training base during WW II. However, by 1952, Squantum had outlived its usefulness and activities of the Naval Air Reserve moved to the air station at South Weymouth, Mass., on December 4, 1953. In the summer of 1923, the establishment of a unit at Great Lakes, Ill., was authorized, utilizing the small

seaplane hangar and facilities already existing there.

In the winter of 1923, the plans for the development of reserve aviation received a staggering blow when, in the budget estimates for FY 25, the aviation estimate was reduced by 82 percent. Fortunately, a large part of this reduction was restored or the damage which would have



The N-9 seaplane entered naval service before the U.S. entered WW I.

resulted to the struggling Naval Aviation Reserve would have been inestimable.

On November 16, 1923, a definite Naval Aviation Reserve policy was approved by the Chief of Naval Operations under the insistence of Naval Aviation pioneer, Rear Admiral William Moffett. This policy provided for one unit in each naval district where public interest and condition warranted. Each unit was to turn out at least 10 new pilots a year. The mission was defined as the enrollment and training of new members who were suitable officer material in order to insure a supply of new blood; and to maintain the efficiency of members already qualified. A single unit was to be furnished two training type planes, with 50-percent spares and aviation material.

During the summer of 1923, 33 students had qualified in primary training types at Squantum and Fort Hamilton, N.Y. During the following summer these students were given 45 days additional active duty at Hampton Roads for advanced training, including navigation, gunnery and bombing. A course of ground instruction in aviation subjects was conducted during their primary and advanced training. During flight training, they were given the rating of Seaman Second Class, USNR, and designated as student Naval Aviation Pilots. At the conclusion of advanced training they were given a professional examination for commission. Successful candidates were commissioned Ensigns, Class Five, U. S. Naval Reserve Force, and designated Naval Aviators. In January 1925, a uniform syllabus of training for all units was set forth by the Bureau of Navigation, covering ground and flight instruction.

In October 1925, the establishment of Naval Reserve Aviation Base, Sand Point, Wash., was authorized. This base, like Squantum, Great Lakes and New York, was established as a two-unit station, conducting preliminary elimination flight training of student reserve aviators, as well as training facilities for reserve pilots previously qualified.

On March 24, 1926, the Navy Department adopted a five-year program for training aviation reserves, which was first proposed as legislation, but finally was adopted as a Navy Department policy. It was designed to provide personnel for the minimum Reserve Aviation Force which would be required at the outbreak of hostilities. Up to this

time, practically no provision had been made for training reserve enlisted men. The few who were trained were paid out of funds made available from allowance for officers' pay. In accordance with the new policy, Fleet Reserve Aviation divisions and squadrons were organized in various sections of the country with authorized complements of officers and enlisted men. These divisions conducted weekly drills and underwent 15-day training periods each year for maintenance of efficiency, and each division was accorded a definite place and mission in war plans.

On March 19, 1927, the FY 28

appropriation for "Organizing Naval Reserve" authorized funds for one year's training duty with the fleet for 50 Naval Reserve aviators with the rank of ensign. On April 19, 1927, the Chief of Naval Operations set forth an operating policy which contemplated Fleet Reserve drill pay and 15-day training periods for 275 aviation officers and 500 enlisted men assigned to aviation divisions. It also provided for 50 ensigns on a year's duty with the fleet. In addition, 45 days primary training was recommended for 120 seamen second class, USNR, and 45 days advanced training for 104 seamen.

In the spring of 1928 advanced flight



training of seamen second class, USNR was transferred to U.S. Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Fla., and the period of advanced training increased to 60 days. A reserve squadron was formed at Pensacola for all reserve training, and instruction in landplanes was added to the syllabus which had previously been carried out at Hampton Roads, Va. About this time, the number of single unit reserve stations in operation was increased by four, at Oakland and Long Beach, Calif.; Detroit, Mich.; and Minneapolis, Minn.

These four stations conducted primary training and were designated Naval

Reserve Aviation Bases. Each had six primary training planes and six other aircraft that could be used for gunnery, bombing, etc.

On February 28, 1929, the Secretary of the Navy set forth a policy revising and bringing up-to-date the five-year program. At this time, a comprehensive plan was laid down defining the Navy Department plans for Naval Reserve Aviation at mobilization. This plan contemplated 31 aviation divisions within CONUS, each having an assigned quota of six planes, for a total of 186. The Bureau of Aeronautics was proceeding with a procurement plan designed to

meet the provisions of the five-year program to arrive at the authorized quota at the end of FY 34. The completion of this procurement program was contingent upon funds being provided by Congress from year to year.

Beginning with those classes of seamen second class to start preliminary flight training in June 1929, and applying to all subsequent classes, the training at the reserve bases consisted of elimination flight training only designed to determine the student's aptitude for flying. About 50 percent qualified for advanced training and these students, after one to three hours of solo, were sent immediately to NAS Pensacola, where they were placed in classes with the regular Navy flight students to take the complete course leading to designation as Naval Aviators. Rigid requirements were adhered to in selecting candidates for training.

Upon completion of the course at Pensacola, the students were commissioned as Ensigns, Class A-V(G), USNR, and ordered to duty for one year with the aircraft squadrons of the fleet. At the end of this year, they were assigned to duty in an inactive status with an Aviation Fleet Division of the Naval Reserve, provided that they lived in the general vicinity of such a division and were in a position to maintain their efficiency by regular attendance at drills and the annual performance of a 15-day period of active duty for training.

Under the Naval Reserve regulations, it was intended that drills for Aviation Fleet Divisions would largely be devoted to carrying on flight operations as units. The drill periods for which retainer pay was received were devoted almost entirely to carrying out the terms of the annual syllabus for flight training of Fleet Naval Reserve aviators. While there were still many difficulties to be overcome, it was felt that great progress was being made

The O2C-1 Helldiver served as a multipurpose aircraft, operating as a fighter, dive-bomber and observer. The reserve force received these aircraft from the active fleet in 1931.

in the formation and training of an adequate Naval Aviation Reserve.

III. Gathering Steam, The 1930s

Fiscal Year 1931 saw the greatest improvement and progress made by the Naval Air Reserve in any single year since its reorganization in 1923. The morale was high and active enthusiasm was displayed by all units. Three factors were largely responsible for the advances that were made: procurement and delivery of service type aircraft; systematic and progressive methods of training for commissioned and enlisted personnel; and competition between units and bases for efficiency ratings resulting from inspections by the Naval Reserve Inspection Board.

Marine Corps Air Reserve squadrons were organized in those localities where the Naval Reserve air bases were located. During this year, 26,381 hours were flown by reserve activities. In addition, NAS Pensacola accumulated 10,018 hours in the instruction of reserve students for qualification and designation as Naval Aviators. No fatalities occurred during this period.

In FY 32, a standard list of machinery and tool equipment was authorized, and 32,500 hours were flown. The progress made by Naval and Marine Corps Reserve Aviation continued and the enthusiasm of the previous year was maintained by all units. The Naval Reserve Inspection Board paid the highest compliment considered possible to Naval Reserve Aviation when it stated in the annual report that Naval Reserve aviators were ready for mobilization duties and that the Naval Aviation Reserve was a very efficient organization.

During this period, many organized volunteer drills were held in addition to the pay drills allocated. These additional periods were required to provide adequate ground and flight training. Flying fields at Squantum and Great Lakes were improved and enlarged to permit night flight training, and New York, St. Louis and Minneapolis accomplished major overhaul of their aircraft for the first time. Many of the bases were also called upon to assist in many extracurricular activities, such as photographic expeditions, search and rescue, mosquito abatement flights, and

lighter-than-air operations.

The inspection board in 1932 also stated that the high state of efficiency was made possible by the method of selection of personnel, advanced flight training at Pensacola and active duty in the fleet. Total flight time for this year was 30,337 hours.

In the next two years, funds were drastically reduced and operations and syllabus flying suffered accordingly. The inspection board expressed the opinion that the reduced flight syllabus, which was less than 45 hours per pilot, was inadequate to maintain the proficiency of Naval Reserve aviators.

For the first time, all aviation bases accomplished complete major overhaul of aircraft and engines. Various federal relief administration agencies assisted materially in improving reserve flying fields. The inspection board held examinations of officers in navigation and radio and of all rated men in their respective ratings. Due to the drastic reduction in available funds, only 20,779 hours were flown during this year.

A Transitional Period

In 1934, the Naval Reserve was made up of three major classes: the Fleet Naval Reserve, the Merchant Marine Naval Reserve, and the Volunteer Naval Reserve. The first and third of these classes included aviation personnel.

The Fleet Naval Reserve consisted of officers and men in training or qualified for combat duty. The aviation group was organized into squadrons composed of definite numbers of officers and men. According to law, this class was expected to perform 15 days' active or training duty, with pay and allowances each year, and a stipulated number of regular drills during the year for each organization. The necessary training planes and equipment were assembled at Naval Reserve aviation bases in the custody of a small number of officers and men on year-round duty. There were 13 such bases in 1934 at which the Marine Corps as well as the Navy aviation reserve units received training. The designation of aviation officers in the Fleet Reserve was A-F (aviation flight officers) and, as of September 30, 1934, there were 257 who carried this designation. Enlisted men in the Fleet Reserve did not have a

specific designation denoting aviation duty.

The Volunteer Naval Reserve was composed of officers and men available for detail in the event of war in accordance with their individual qualifications. Drills and training duty were voluntary, but no compensation was paid for such duty. There were two main subdivisions of the Volunteer Naval Reserve: those individuals qualified for combat duty, in a degree similar to the Fleet Naval Reserve, and designated for general service (G); and those individuals available for specific technical and specialist duties, designated as specialists (S). The first group included reserve officers who served in WW I, former Navy officers and men, and Naval Aviators. All of these were eligible for organizations of the Fleet Naval Reserve, but lack of vacancies and residence at a distance from the location of the reserve unit prevented membership in the Fleet Reserve for this group.

The specialists included engineers of all types, lawyers, medical personnel, etc. Officers of the Volunteer Reserve available for general aviation service were designated A-V(G), aviation officers. There were 142 enrolled as of September 30, 1934. Aviation officers available for special service were designated: A-V(K), aviation ground officers; A-V(S), aviation officers; and A-V(T), aviation transport pilots. As of September 30, 1934, there were respectively 22, 109, and 55 officers enrolled in these categories.

Enlisted personnel in the Volunteer Reserve were likewise divided into classes. There were two aviation categories: V-2, volunteers associated with aviation organizations; and V-5. Naval Reserve Student Naval Aviation Pilots. The numerical strength of these two categories on September 30, 1934, was 345 and 17, respectively.

The mission of the Naval Reserve was "to procure, organize and train the officers and men necessary in the event of war." For planning purposes, it was considered that the forces of the Naval Reserve should be adequate to supplement the regular Navy to carry on for the first 120 days of any possible war. It was estimated that, after the first 120 days, training stations and special schools could turn out the numbers

in the formation and training of an adequate Naval Aviation Reserve.

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The specialists included engineers of all types, lawyers, medical personnel, etc. Officers of the Volunteer Reserve available for general aviation service were designated A-V(G), aviation officers. There were 142 enrolled as of September 30, 1934. Aviation officers available for special service were designated: A-V(K), aviation ground officers; A-V(S), aviation officers; and A-V(T), aviation transport pilots. As of September 30, 1934, there were respectively 22, 109, and 55 officers enrolled in these categories.

Enlisted personnel in the Volunteer Reserve were likewise divided into classes. There were two aviation categories: V-2, volunteers associated with aviation organizations; and V-5. Naval Reserve Student Naval Aviation Pilots. The numerical strength of these two categories on September 30, 1934, was 345 and 17, respectively.

The mission of the Naval Reserve was "to procure, organize and train the officers and men necessary in the event of war." For planning purposes, it was considered that the forces of the Naval Reserve should be adequate to supplement the regular Navy to carry on for the first 120 days of any possible war. It was estimated that, after the first 120 days, training stations and special schools could turn out the numbers



required to continue the war.

The Aviation Cadet Program

The Federal Aviation Commission, which was appointed in 1934, in accordance with an act of Congress to study and make recommendations of all phases of aviation in the United States, included in its report comments on aviation in the Naval Reserve. The Commission's Recommendation No. 54 called for a substantial strengthening of the aviation reserve of the Navy (and the Army), and for that purpose recommended that a higher priority in the allotment of funds be awarded those activities. The recommendation continued:

"In war against a major power, our air forces would feel an almost instant need for the mobilization of at least twice, and in the Army probably at least three or four times, their regular personnel. The numbers immediately mobilized in full

readiness for duty would have to be backed up, in order that military effort could be carried on, by a Reserve of some additional thousands of qualified pilots who could be made ready for full service within a few weeks. As we have studied the present status of the Reserves, it has seemed to us that this problem has been faced on so small a scale as scarcely to constitute more than a working model. The Navy has a total enrolled Reserve of 481 officer pilots, of whom 251 could be considered as ready for immediate duty....

"In establishing priorities in a Reserve force, we take it as self-evident that the most urgent concern must be with the first-line group that stands ready to step directly into tactical organizations on the day of a declaration of war. The Navy has what seems to us an admirable organization of such a reserve in its 31 Fleet Reserve Squadrons, numbering 851 officer pilots, and organized to fly as a unit for some 45 hours a year in the

The NY series training planes were two-seat, convertible land or sea aircraft that stressed simplicity but ruggedness. The Navy purchased 186 NY-2s in 1929, 35 of which went to the reserves.

fulfillment of a syllabus of military exercises drawn up by the Navy Department and to put in a substantial amount of additional practice under the direction of the unit commander. These organizations seem to be close to the ideal of military readiness, as do the nine squadrons of the Marine Reserve which are similarly organized, but their numbers are far inferior to any possible wartime need for immediate services. The specific need here seems to be for additional funds for Reserve purposes.

"...it seems to us conservative to say that the aggregate of effective air force Reserves should be at least double what it is now."

The emphasis of the above



In the thirties, the SU scout aircraft served in various utility roles with fleet and reserve units.

recommendation by the Federal Aviation Commission was based on the need for increasing the numerical strength of reserve aviation personnel. As far as future numerical strength was concerned, it appeared in 1935 that the Aviation Cadet Program would furnish Naval Reserve Aviation with adequate officer personnel. This would take place, it was estimated, through the commissioning of aviation cadets in the Naval or Marine Corps Reserve at the completion of their tours of active duty, and their assignment to reserve squadrons.

One justification of the Aviation Cadet Program was to build up the future strength of the aviation reserves. Apparently, with this possibility in mind, Navy Department spokesmen presenting the estimates for Naval Reserve appropriations to the House Appropriations Committee for FYs 36 through 39 did not express great concern over the numbers enrolled in the Naval Reserve forces. In March 1935, Lieutenant W. G. Tomlinson, who was introduced as an aviation officer directly

identified with Naval and Marine Corps aviation, told the House Appropriations Committee:

"The aviation cadet bill, if enacted, and if funds are provided to carry it out in accordance with the proposal of the Naval Department, will in time build Naval Reserve Aviation up to adequate numbers, and that will take care of the officer phase of it. If given proper authority, we can recruit enlisted men locally at the Reserve bases, enlist them, and train them so that they will be in a position to satisfactorily carry out their duties."

Briefly, the Aviation Cadet Program provided for the selection of young men to be appointed by the Secretary of the Navy to the grade of Aviation Cadet in the Naval and Marine Corps Reserve. The appointment was contingent upon the appointee's signing an agreement to serve on active duty for four years, unless he was released sooner. Upon completion of the four years of active, the aviation cadet was eligible for a reserve commission.

The cadets were issued uniforms and

equipment and were to be paid \$75 per month during flight training and \$125 per month while on active sea duty, plus a subsistence allowance of one dollar per day. A uniform allowance of \$150 was to be paid on assignment to sea duty. In addition, during their period of active duty, the aviation cadets were issued a government life insurance policy of \$10,000, with the premiums paid by the Navy.

The Aviation Cadet Program was passed by Congress and approved by the President in April 1935. The first class of 55 cadets reported to Pensacola on July 20, 1935, and by September, there were 192 aviation cadets undergoing training, with an additional 201 potential cadets undergoing elimination training to determine their adaptability to flight before going to Pensacola.

By September 1936, the first cadets were at sea and, two years later, 614 aviation cadets were on active Naval Aviator duty.

The Aviation Cadet Act of 1935 was designed to furnish the Navy with additional Naval Aviators sufficient for

the peacetime operation of the fleet. until such time as regular Navy personnel became available. It was also intended to strengthen the Naval Reserve by the addition of a group of qualified Naval Aviators. The projection was that the requirements of 1941 would be met with approximately 721 cadets on duty. From that year forward, their numbers would decrease until they eventually disappeared.

This concept of the Aviation Cadet Program's intent was held at high levels throughout the Navy Department, except for a few intrepid souls who saw the program's possibilities. A letter of April 27, 1936, from the Chief, Bureau of Aeronautics to the Chief, Bureau of Navigation stated:

"Another and more general conclusion is that there is little prospect of meeting Naval Aviator requirements from regular service sources. and that we must accept the Aviation Cadet as a permanent fixture and expect them to compose 45 percent of the Naval Aviators, unless some remedial action can be taken."

Gradually, acceptance of the Aviation Cadet Program as a permanent source of supply began to spread. Indeed, despite some legislative maneuvering to change aspects of the Cadet Act, and grumblings from the regulars, it was becoming obvious that to release the cadets approaching the termination of their sea duty period would seriously hamper the fleet. One admiral wrote:

"As the time draws near to release a number of cadets from active service, the pressure to retain and commission them in the regular service will become acute. This question will undoubtedly raise that of a separate air corps, in which cadets might expect permanent commissions and advancement. In order to anticipate such suggestions and provide an incentive for professional excellence, it is believed that a very limited number should be commissioned regular ensigns each year."

However, with all of the extensive correspondence over a three-year period, the Aviation Cadet Program remained relatively unchanged.

The appropriations hearings indicate that a problem of somewhat greater concern to the Navy Department than the numerical strength of the aviation reserve was the maintenance of an

annual training program of sufficient extent to keep the reserve forces at satisfactory levels of efficiency. The extent of the reserve training program was determined each year by the size of the appropriation made for that purpose.

During FY 34, it was necessary to reduce the number of flying hours per officer from a total of 45 to a total of approximately 30; the number of drills from 48 to 24; and to eliminate training for flying officers of the Volunteer Reserve altogether. It was also "necesssary to reduce the personnel on full-time duty at the various Naval Reserve aviation bases. This curtailment in the training program was forced by considerations of economy. Although Congress had appropriated sufficient funds to finance the training program recommended by the Department, the Director of the Budget limited expenditures for the Naval Reserve to approximately two-thirds of the amount appropriated.

In presenting estimates for FY 35 to Congress, representatives of the Bureaus of Navigation and Aeronautics who were concerned with the activities of the Naval Reserve pointed out that the necessary reductions in training during FY 34 had jeopardized the efficiency of the Reserve forces. It was pointed out that a reduction of allowed flying time below approximately 48 hours per year increased the risk of accidents through a decline in flying proficiency.

The failure to provide flight training for flyers of the Volunteer Reserve was likewise a serious matter. Most of these officers were Pensacola graduates who were not attached to a Fleet Reserve squadron, largely because of their place of residence. It was pointed out that if officers of this group were not provided with flight training from time to time, they would soon cease to be Naval Aviators. This situation, if it should develop, would not only interfere with mobilization plans, but would result in a loss of the Navy's investment in the training of these officers.

During FY 35, sufficient funds were appropriated to increase the number of drills for the aviation units of the Fleet Reserve to 36, from the 22 which had been held during the previous fiscal year. Apparently, additional funds became available during the year since a

summary of Naval Reserve activities submitted to Congress at a later date indicates that 48 drills were actually held. In addition, it was possible to increase the number of flight hours per officer to 45 from the FY 34 level of approximately 30. However, no flight training was given to members of the Volunteer Reserve because of a lack of funds.

In FY 36, there was a considerable increase in the number of Fleet Reserve officers on permanent active duty. These officers were called to active duty to serve as instructors in the Aviation Cadet Program. According to the FY 36 report of the Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics, this diversion of Fleet Reserve officers to active duty positions made it possible to provide 14-day training periods for a considerable number of volunteer aviation reserve officers who previously had been deprived of this training due to lack of funds. There was no significant expansion in the training program for the aviation reserve during FYs 37 and 38. During the latter year, however, funds were available for training with pay for a fraction of the Volunteer Reserve. The training quota was 425 officers and 1,066 men, of which the Volunteer Reserve was allotted 125 officers and 300 men. The Fleet Reserve was likewise benefitted to some degree during these two years. The total number of enlisted personnel attached to the Fleet Reserve aviation squadrons was increased from approximately 500 in FY 36 to 713 in FY 37, and to approximately 1,000 the following year.

During 1935 to 1938, there was considerable discussion of a legislative amendment to the Naval Reserve Act of 1925 under which the Naval Reserve continued to function. A Navy Department draft of a new Naval Reserve law was prepared in the latter part of 1936 by a conference of regular and reserve officers, but failed approval by the Director of the Budget in March 1937. The bill was later redrafted and was approved by Congress and the President on June 25, 1938. It was known as the Naval Reserve Act of 1938.

This act contained little or no language exclusively applicable to the aviation components of the reserve forces. However, some of the provisions of general application were of significance

to the Naval Aviation Reserve. The more significant of these were: the Fleet Reserve was to be composed only of personnel transferred from the regular Navy to the Naval Reserve; the actively drilling components of the existing Fleet Reserve were transferred to a new category, the Organized Reserve. Flying officers formerly designated A-F were to be classified as A-O; and the act stated that the maximum numerical strength of the reserve as determined by the Secretary of the Navy should be reached within a 10-year period, as nearly as possible by equal annual increments. This objective was made subject to annual appropriations approved by Congress.

During the hearings on the appropriation bill for FY 40, reference was made to the intended expansion of the Naval Reserve as stated in the Naval Reserve Act of 1938. Captain Gygax, then in charge of reserve matters in the Bureau of Navigation, made the statement that the estimate presented to the committee was entirely inadequate to accomplish the first step in the announced intention of reaching maximum strength of the reserve in a 10-year period. When asked why, he replied, "The budget prepared by...the Bureau of Navigation did contemplate a reasonable first step in that direction but budgetary consideration, both in the Navy Department and in the Bureau of the Budget, reduced this estimate to what we have here."

As in earlier years, funds for the training of the Volunteer Reserve were least adequate. Capt. Gygax stated that the estimates submitted would provide a two-week training period each year for only one out of 25 officers enrolled in the Volunteer Reserve. In other words, only one training period every 25 years could be provided for each individual. The Navy's goal at the time was sufficient funds for a training period every four years. Some members of the committee appeared sympathetic to the need for additional training of the Volunteer Reserve, but did not see fit to recommend an increase in the budget estimates for this purpose. The Chief of the Bureau of Navigation indicated in his FY 39 report that, through savings on other portions of the appropriation, it had been possible to extend some training to approximately one-twelfth of the Volunteer Reserve officers during that fiscal year.

The same annual report also raised the problem of a shortage of qualified pilots in the reserve aviation squadrons. It was stated that this shortage had "long been a matter of concern to the Bureau." Since all individuals enrolled in the Naval Reserve for flight training after July 1, 1935, had been a part of the Aviation Cadet Program, no new officer personnel had been added to the reserve squadrons. In addition, since 89 of the 227 officers of the Organized Reserve (Fleet Reserve prior to the Naval Reserve Act of 1938) were on active training duty in connection with the Aviation Cadet Program, only 138 were available for mobilization. It has already been pointed out that the problem of inadequate enrollment in the aviation reserves was not stressed in appropriation hearings. The lack of emphasis on shortages of reserve personnel was in part the result

of a belief that the Aviation Cadet Program would provide an ample supply of reserve officers in the future. It was probably due to the fact that in view of the limited training program permitted by available funds, an increase in the numbers enrolled in the reserve would serve no useful purpose. Therefore, the need for expanding the training of those already enrolled was stressed in the discussion of appropriations for the maintenance of the Naval Reserve.

There are indications, however, that a shortage of reserves in aviation was a matter of concern within the Navy, notwithstanding the representations made to the House Appropriations Committee. In a secret memorandum to the Chief of the Bureau of Aeronautics dated December 10, 1935, the Plans Division of the Bureau indicated its belief that the progress of the campaign in an



“orange war” was entirely dependent upon the number of pilots in the Naval Aviation Reserve rather than upon the production of aircraft. The minimum number of reserve officers needed to meet mobilization requirements was 7,453. The magnitude of the expansion required by this estimate is emphasized by the fact that as of September 30, 1935, there were only 631 reserve officers enrolled in the various aviation categories.

The Plans Division memorandum recognized the difficulties of securing sufficient funds for the desired expansion and training, but recommended that the Navy present to Congress a definite seven-year program for reaching the minimum personnel goals by 1942, and concluded with the statement, “If Naval Aviation is to carry out the task assigned to it in an orange campaign, steps should

be taken immediately to remedy the critical Naval Aviation Reserve situation.”

The Flight Division of BuAer expressed approval of the conclusions reached by the Plans Division relative to reserve personnel and recommended that proposals for expansion of the Naval Reserve be submitted to the Bureau of Navigation and the Chief of Naval Operations. The suggestion was also made that reserve pilots probably could be obtained and trained in the same manner as aviation cadets,

In the annual estimate for FY 38 prepared by the Chief of Naval Operations in 1936, the requirements for the Naval Aviation Reserve included the following references to expansion of the reserve forces: “Provision should be made to expand the Aviation Cadet training to ensure the graduation of 500

from Pensacola yearly; to increase the enrollment of AVT (sic) pilots; to arrange a system of certifying qualifications for naval training of civilian pilots and issue such certificates in exchange for promise to join the Navy for training at Pensacola; and to extend the enrollment of civilian personnel in the aviation enlisted classification.”

In preparing budget estimates within the Navy Department, provision was made for an expansion of the aviation cadet training program intended to result in the training of 500 aviation cadets annually for four years. However, financial obstacles were encountered in the fall of 1936. The Director of the Budget requested a total reduction of \$75 million in the Navy Department estimate. In response to a request from the Chief of Naval Operations for comment on the possibility of reductions in bureau programs, BuAer voluntarily suggested the elimination of funds for expansion of facilities at Pensacola and for additional aircraft to accommodate the expanded Aviation Cadet Program. The Bureau pointed out that the expansion in the program was designed to produce a “reserve of reserves.” Such surplus was to build up reserve aviation squadrons in the event of mobilization. BuAer indicated that it would prefer to postpone this expansion in the Aviation Cadet Program in preference to other budget reductions affecting its programs. BuAer’s suggestion was apparently accepted, and it resulted in further delay in attaining the desired number of Pensacola-trained pilots in the reserves.

In spite of the need for augmenting aviation reserve personnel to meet mobilization requirements, the Aviation Cadet Program continued to be limited to numbers sufficient to supply the current needs of the regular Navy. The consequences of this situation were reviewed again by the Bureau of Navigation in a letter to BuAer in March 1939, which stated that the contemplated active duty utilization of



The FF-1 was a two-seat, carrier-based fighter that was flown by the Naval Air Reserve beginning in 1936.

aviation cadets who had completed their required periods of service would impose an additional limitation on the growth of a reserve for mobilization purposes. As a result of this situation, "...the estimated annual increase of such a reserve for emergency is so small that it now appears to be impossible to ever meet mobilization needs with the program as at present constructed."

After pointing out that the Naval Reserve Act of 1938 required plans be made to bring the reserve to desired strength of qualified and trained personnel within a 10-year period, the Bureau concluded, "...the present and proposed aviation cadet programs do not appear to meet the requirements of this provision of law. It thus appears necessary to revise the concept upon which the Aviation Cadet Program is based or to establish some other means to create such a reserve."

The Bureau of Aeronautics agreed that immediate action to remedy the deficiency in reserve personnel should be taken. Its letter also pointed out that the Naval Aviation Reserve Act of 1939 in conjunction with the Naval Reserve Act of 1938 contemplated a reserve of 6,000 reserve Naval Aviators by July 1, 1948, whereas Bureau estimates indicated that under the existing program there would be 1,548 Naval Aviators in the reserve on that date.

Two recommendations were made by BuAer. The first requested authorization to increase the number of aviation cadets entering Pensacola during FYs 40 and 41 to 350 cadets beyond estimated fleet needs. The second recommendation called for a study of all phases of aviation personnel. An attempt was made by BuNav to secure funds for an increase in the number of aviation cadets entering Pensacola during FY 40, but the increase was disallowed by the Bureau of the Budget. However, BuNav recommended to the Chief of Naval Operations a substantial increase in aviation cadet training for FY 41.

Other sources of aviator personnel to augment reserve squadrons were likewise considered during the spring of 1939. One proposal called for commissioning private pilots and commercial pilots not employed on airlines or similar essential employment in the Naval Reserve; providing training for these individuals at Naval Reserve

aviation bases while on inactive duty; and then their incorporation into reserve squadrons as Naval Aviators.

This plan was sponsored by Congressman Maas of the House Naval Affairs Committee who was concerned over the shortages in reserve personnel. Congressman Maas presented his plan at a meeting of the Naval Reserve Policy Board, and also at hearings on the Naval Aviation Reserve Act of 1939. On the latter occasion, Mr. Maas expressed the belief that the majority of aviation cadets completing their required term of duty would accept jobs in commercial aviation and would not be available as aviators in the reserve squadrons. The Bureau of Aeronautics was likewise aware of the possibility that aviation cadets might seek opportunities to transfer to the Army Air Forces because of the greater possibilities of a permanent career offered by that service.

In spite of the serious actual and potential deficiencies in reserve personnel, the Maas plan did not receive strong support within the Bureau of Aeronautics. Opposition to the plan declared it an unwise reduction in standards heretofore maintained for the Naval Aviator designation. The majority took the position that, regardless of private flight experience, only an intensive course in Naval Aviation such as that provided at Pensacola could produce a Naval Aviator acceptable to the fleet. However, no official action was taken on the plan, and apparently no official position was taken by the Bureau of Aeronautics prior to the end of FY 39.

The mission of the Naval Reserve was, as previously stated, to provide a trained force of officers and men immediately available for duty with the Navy in the event of war. This force should be of sufficient numbers to meet the Navy's needs until such time as schools and training stations, established at the outbreak of war, could begin to supply trained personnel for the continuation of the war. The foregoing account of developments during the years 1934 to mid-1939 indicates that at the end of the period under discussion, the Naval Aviation Reserve was clearly not in a position to fulfill its assigned mission.

While it appeared that the efficiency of the squadrons of the Organized Reserve was high and that they were, in general, prepared for speedy mobilization, the

number of aviators enrolled was totally inadequate as compared with estimated mobilization requirements. Against a mobilization requirement in April 1939 of 2,905 reserve Naval Aviators of classes A-O and A-V(G), and subject to upward revision within the three months following, there were 226 A-O officers and 118 A-V(G) officers enrolled as of June 20, 1939. Since the A-V(G) officers were not regularly attached to reserve squadrons, they had in many cases received a minimum of training from year to year. The several classes of the Volunteer Reserve received little or no training during this period. It should be remembered, however, that the aviation cadets constituted a group in the Naval Reserve, and that the program was financed from Naval Reserve appropriations. Thus, the creation and development of the Aviation Cadet Program may be regarded as a significant expansion in the Naval Aviation Reserve.

On the other hand, the expanding aeronautical organization absorbed all of the cadets which could be trained during the period to meet the requirements of the peacetime regular Navy for aviators. Consequently, the Aviation Cadet Program failed to augment the reserve squadrons, which was its original intent; and the prospects of significant expansion in the reserve squadrons from this source in the future were somewhat dim in the spring of 1939.

The appropriations made available by Congress were the limiting factor on the activities of the Naval Reserve. However, although Congress failed to increase substantially the funds available for the Naval Reserve over the estimate submitted by the Navy Department for each fiscal year, in no case during FYs 35 through 40 did Congress significantly reduce the Naval Reserve appropriation, at least that portion earmarked for aviation. It appears that limitations on the funds available for the use of the Naval Reserve were imposed at earlier stages in the preparation of the annual estimates, either in the Navy Department or in the Bureau of the Budget.

The draft of a bill which embodied changes in the Aviation Cadet Act was requested by BuNav and was prepared by the Judge Advocate General and forwarded to Congress and the Chief of BuNav on April 11, 1939. The bill became known as the Naval Aviation Reserve Act

of 1939, and embodied several significant changes in the Aviation Cadet Act of 1935:

Aviation cadets, if qualified after completion of training, could be commissioned as ensigns in the Naval Reserve or second lieutenants in the Marine Corps Reserve.

Promotions to the next higher rank after three years of active duty excluding the year of training were authorized, subject to qualification by examination.

Following cadet training, the individual could remain on active duty up to seven years.

The lump sum bonus of \$1,500 was reduced to \$500 payable upon release from active duty of four years or more. The increase in pay received as an ensign would offset the reductions in the bonus.

Aviation cadets serving in the Fleet were to be commissioned immediately and given the option of retaining the old pay with the \$1,500 bonus, or accepting ensign's pay and the new \$500 reduced bonus.

The basic provisions duplicated those applying to the Army's flying cadets. The hearings on the bill were low-key, and the bill was passed by Congress and approved by President Roosevelt on June

13, 1939. Concurrent with the bill's passage, the Navy Department established a new administrative classification for the officers to be appointed under its provisions. The request for such classification was made by BuNav in anticipation of the passage of the act. The Bureau established a new volunteer class of commissioned officers of the Naval Reserve to be known as Class A-V(N). The composition of the new class consisted of "...naval aviators and ex-aviation cadets serving on active duty to meet fleet needs, as distinguished from reserve officers on active duty for their own training or in connection with the instruction, training and drilling of the Naval Reserve."

Thus, within four years of its inception, the Aviation Cadet Program was strengthened by improving the status of the individuals concerned. Originally conceived as a temporary measure, the program had proven itself successful and had become an important source of aviation personnel. Just how important would become crystal clear in the frantic years of the early 1940s during the WW II. Without the cadre of aviation cadet alumni, most of which were immediately commissioned after Pearl Harbor, U.S.

Naval Aviation would have been even harder pressed to meet its commitments while the country geared up for production of men and machines.

IV. World War II, The Big Test

Even though the acts of 1935 and 1939 went a long way in creating a viable reserve aviation force in the Navy, there was still much to be done. By the time the Japanese attacked Navy facilities at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, and the Philippines on December 8 and 9, catapulting the U.S. into WW II, the reserve resources still left much to be desired.

World War II was to prove again the ability of Americans to adapt themselves in war. Instead of a "trained and ready reserve," the Navy had only a relative handful of trained men ready to step in and help the regular forces in the opening days of the war. Of the thousands of trained aviators, only 600 were available immediately, and there were only 700 enlisted reserves ready. During the war, aviation training in the Navy involved more than 54,000 aviators and hundreds of thousands of enlisted men. The number of trained reserves grew in a



Carrier flight deck personnel prepare to tie down an F4U Corsair of reserve squadron VF-884, while off-duty shipmates take a break in the sun.

four-year period to a number which staggered the imagination. For example, from 1935 to 1940, only 1,800 aviation cadets had been trained. In 1941, the input jumped to 7,000 and, by the end of 1943, the rate soared to 20,000 per year — an increase of nearly 300 percent!

By the end of 1944, there were more than 55,000 trained Naval Aviators plus a similar number of aviation specialists and general service officers on active duty in aviation duties. At the end of the war, in August 1945, 83 percent of the Navy's fleet manpower consisted of reserves.

The tremendous training effort involved opening several major bases, including New Orleans, Atlanta and Dallas. In November, 1940, one-third of the Navy's reserve aviation squadrons had been mobilized, and full mobilization of the Naval Air Reserve was accomplished by January 1941. NRAB Squantum began training aviators from all allied countries, as well as Navy personnel. Flight training was conducted as was antiaircraft training in the

marshes around the station. Outlying fields in Beverly and Ayer, north of Boston, served as bombing and gunnery training facilities.

One of the legendary figures in the history of NRAB Squantum was Commander John Shea from Boston. Commissioned a reserve-ensign at the close of WW I, Shea returned to civilian life and joined the Aviation Reserve Division at NRAB Squantum. He eventually became executive officer of Squantum in 1931 and remained there until 1940. Like thousands of other fellow reservists, Cdr. Shea was recalled to active duty in 1940, reporting aboard USS *Wasp* as air operations officer. *Wasp* was destined to see a great deal of action after Pearl Harbor, serving as fighting companion with the few American carriers operational in the Pacific after Pearl Harbor. The responsibility fell to this small band of forward-based ships to face the seemingly invincible Japanese juggernaut and halt the enemy drive.

While supporting the U.S. invasion of Guadalcanal in the late summer of 1942,

Wasp was sunk on September 15, and Cdr. Shea was reported "missing in action." Shea was well-known throughout his command as a hard worker, but his fame in the "outside" world came through a letter which he wrote to his five-year-old son, Jackie, just before he sailed in *Wasp*. Dated June 29, 1942, Shea's letter has become a classic and is reproduced here.

"Dear Jackie:

This is the first letter I have written directly to my little son. I am thrilled to know you can read it all by yourself. If you miss some of the words it will be because I do not write very plainly. Mother will help you in that case, I am sure.

"I was certainly glad to hear your voice over the long distance telephone. It sounded as though I were right in the living room with you. You sounded as though you missed your daddy very much. I miss you, too, more than anyone will ever know. It is too bad this war could not have been delayed a few more years so that I could grow up again with you and



The distinctive gull-wing design of Vought's F4U Corsairs is unmistakable as silhouettes in the predawn sky over USS *Sicily* (CVE -1 18) in 1950. An earlier version of the aircraft, the FG-1D, was a mainstay in the reserves in the late 1940s.

do all the things I planned to do when you were old enough to go to school.

"I thought how nice it would be to come home early in the afternoon and play ball with you and go mountain climbing and see the trees and brooks, and learn all about woodcraft, hunting, fishing, swimming and other things like that. I suppose we must be brave and put these things off now for a while.

"When you are a little bigger you will know why your daddy is not home so much any more. You know we have a big country and we have ideas as to how people should live and enjoy the riches of it and how each is born with equal rights to life, freedom and the pursuit of happiness. Unfortunately there are some countries in the world where they do not have these ideas, where a boy cannot grow up to be what he wants to be with no limit on his opportunities to be a great man such as a great priest, statesman, doctor, soldier, businessman, etc.

"Because there are people in countries who want to change our nation, its ideals, its form of government and way of life, we must leave our homes and families to fight. Fighting for the defense of our country, ideals, homes and honor is an honor and a duty which your daddy has to do before he can come home and settle down with you and mother. When it is done he is coming home to be with you always and forever. So wait just a little while longer. I am afraid it will be more than the two weeks you told me on the phone.

"In the meantime take good care of mother, be a good boy and grow up to be a good young man. Study hard when you go to school. Be a leader in everything good in life. Be a good Catholic and you can't help being a good American. Play fair always. Strive to win but if you lose, lose like a gentlemen and a good sportsman.

"Don't ever be a quitter, either in sports or in your business or profession when you grow up. Get all the education you can. Stay close to Mother and follow her advice. Obey her in everything, no matter how you may at times disagree. She knows what is best and will never let you down or lead you away from the right and honorable things of life.

"If I don't get back, you will have to be Mother's protector because you will be the only one she has. You must grow up to take my place as well as your own in her life and heart.

"Love your grandmother and grandad as long as they live. They, too, will never let you down. Love your aunts and see them as often as you can. Last of all, don't ever forget your daddy. Pray for him to come back and, if it is God's will that he does not, be the kind of a boy and man your daddy wants you to be.

"Kiss Mother for me every night. Goodbye for now.

"With all my love and devotion for Mother and you.

Your Daddy"
LINE SPACE

While perhaps a bit maudlin for readers 45 years later, Shea's letter was typical of similar pieces of correspondence many fathers wrote to their families showing the emotions of being separated and going into battle.

The letter also gives a good feeling for the commitment many reservists felt during their period of active service. The airfield at NAS South Weymouth, descendant of NRAB Squantum, is named in honor of Jack Shea.

NAS Anacostia, in Washington, D.C., also contributed to the war effort. New buildings were constructed and in 1942, and the Photographic Science Laboratory, now known as the Naval Imaging Command, moved into its new \$4 million facilities. A new aviation unit, the Aircraft Experimental and Development Squadron, was formed and based at Anacostia. Its function was to experiment with aerial tactics. During 1943, the Tactical Air Intelligence Center moved from Philadelphia to Anacostia to evaluate captured Japanese equipment.

The WAVES — Women Accepted for Voluntary Enlisted Service — first came to Anacostia in January 1943, and various other administrative and developmental facilities took up residence there as well.

World War II provided the first chance in 20 years for complete integration of the reserve forces. Certainly the overwhelming victory over the axis powers — Japan, Germany and Italy — could not have been obtained without the huge influx of ready reservists, those men already in the reserves in 1941, and the drafted and volunteer reserve personnel who came in after the declaration of war following Pearl Harbor. (There was a measure of friction between the hardened regulars, particularly at the senior levels, who occasionally made little attempt to hide

their contempt for "those reservists." And the feeling was sometimes reciprocated by the reservists. But, on the grander scale, the complete integration of the reserves with the regular forces provided this country with the means to completely defeat the enemy. There could have been no other way.

V. Postwar Activities and Korea, The Reserve Show

After the stunningly complete victory of the Allies in 1945, the winners tried to return to prewar simplicity. War-weary Britain battled with the desires of its population to supply food and clothing. The U.S., while trying to maintain the momentum of the wartime boom economy, was beginning to realize its new role as leader of the free world against the Soviet monolith. And the battered countries of Europe's mainland tried to rebuild. Most of Asia was in ruins, lifeless. It was a hard world immediately following the devastating global war and victory by one side, complete as it was, did not bring a commensurate promise of relief for anyone.

Finally understanding its new found dominance, the U.S. also understood that it would not allow its military forces to completely wind down. Although severe cuts in military spending and construction programs did occur, one area which was addressed was the maintenance of the reserve forces, including the Naval Air Reserve.

The post war plans officers decided that loss of trained reserves would be wasteful and the Naval Air Reserve Training Command was established as the instrument to continue to utilize the manpower in the reserves. Headquarters for the command was established at NAS Glenview, Ill., in November 1945, with formal commissioning ceremonies in July 1946. Rear Admiral F. D. Wagner became the first Chief, Naval Air Reserve Training (CNAResTra) on November 1, 1945. From his headquarters in Glenview, CNAResTra could control the thousands of naval air reservists throughout the country. Rear Admiral E. C. Ewen took over from RAdm. Wagner in December 1945 and, together with Brigadier General C. B. Schilt — Medal of Honor winner in Nicaragua in 1928 — built the joint resources of the Navy and Marine Corps Air Reserves.

Launching the admittedly ambitious air

do all the things I planned to do when you were old enough to go to school.

"I thought how nice it would be to come home early in the afternoon and play ball with you and go mountain climbing and see the trees and brooks, and learn all about woodcraft, hunting, fishing, swimming and other things like that. I suppose we must be brave and put these things off now for a while.

"When you are a little bigger you will know why your daddy is not home so much any more. You know we have a big country and we have ideas as to how people should live and enjoy the riches of it and how each is born with equal rights to life, freedom and the pursuit of happiness. Unfortunately there are some countries in the world where they do not have these ideas, where a boy cannot grow up to be what he wants to be with no limit on his opportunities to be a great man such as a great priest, statesman, doctor, soldier, businessman, etc.

"Because there are people in countries who want to change our nation, its ideals, its form of government and way of life, we must leave our homes and families to fight. Fighting for the defense of our country, ideals, homes and honor is an honor and a duty which your daddy has to do before he can come home and settle down with you and mother. When it is done he is coming home to be with you always and forever. So wait just a little while longer. I am afraid it will be more than the two weeks you told me on the phone.

"In the meantime take good care of mother, be a good boy and grow up to be a good young man. Study hard when you go to school. Be a leader in everything good in life. Be a good Catholic and you can't help being a good American. Play fair always. Strive to win but if you lose, lose like a gentlemen and a good sportsman.

"Don't ever be a quitter, either in sports or in your business or profession when you grow up. Get all the education you can. Stay close to Mother and follow her advice. Obey her in everything, no matter how you may at times disagree. She knows what is best and will never let you down or lead you away from the right and honorable things of life.

"If I don't get back, you will have to be Mother's protector because you will be the only one she has. You must grow up to take my place as well as your own in her life and heart.

"Love your grandmother and grandad as long as they live. They, too, will never let you down. Love your aunts and see them as often as you can. Last of all, don't ever forget your daddy. Pray for him to come back and, if it is God's will that he does not, be the kind of a boy and man your daddy wants you to be.

"Kiss Mother for me every night. Goodbye for now.

"With all my love and devotion for Mother and you.

Your Daddy"
LINE SPACE

While perhaps a bit maudlin for readers 45 years later, Shea's letter was typical of similar pieces of correspondence many fathers wrote to their families showing the emotions of being separated and going into battle.

The letter also gives a good feeling for the commitment many reservists felt during their period of active service. The airfield at NAS South Weymouth, descendant of NRAB Squantum, is named in honor of Jack Shea.

NAS Anacostia, in Washington, D.C., also contributed to the war effort. New buildings were constructed and in 1942, and the Photographic Science Laboratory, now known as the Naval Imaging Command, moved into its new \$4 million facilities. A new aviation unit, the Aircraft Experimental and Development Squadron, was formed and based at Anacostia. Its function was to experiment with aerial tactics. During 1943, the Tactical Air Intelligence Center moved from Philadelphia to Anacostia to evaluate captured Japanese equipment.

The WAVES — Women Accepted for Voluntary Enlisted Service — first came to Anacostia in January 1943, and various other administrative and developmental facilities took up residence there as well.

World War II provided the first chance in 20 years for complete integration of the reserve forces. Certainly the overwhelming victory over the axis powers — Japan, Germany and Italy — could not have been obtained without the huge influx of ready reservists, those men already in the reserves in 1941, and the drafted and volunteer reserve personnel who came in after the declaration of war following Pearl Harbor. (There was a measure of friction between the hardened regulars, particularly at the senior levels, who occasionally made little attempt to hide

their contempt for "those reservists." And the feeling was sometimes reciprocated by the reservists. But, on the grander scale, the complete integration of the reserves with the regular forces provided this country with the means to completely defeat the enemy. There could have been no other way.

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reserve program was far from easy. Personnel to fill the active duty complement of 21 naval air stations and training units had to be recruited from the veterans who were released or discharged from the Navy. In some instances, it took six months to get half of the active duty allowance filled. A complement of 5,000 officers and 30,000 enlisted men was assigned to the "ready reserve," as those who were in a "drill-pay status" were called.

The mission of the ready reserve was to form a group of trained pilots and men to man the "mothballed fleet" in the event of a national emergency. A "standby reserve" made up of volunteers in a nonpay status would act as a buffer and replace those in the ready reserve who were recalled to active duty.

The first year of operation proved conclusively that war-trained reservists still had an interest in the Navy and in Naval Aviation. Naval Reserve aviators flew 412,000 flight hours and 55 air groups were commissioned throughout the Naval Air Reserve Training Command. In 1947, the ready reserve was redesignated the "Organized Reserve," and the standby reserve was called the "Volunteer Reserve." The rough spots uncovered in a year of operation were smoothed out. Close harmony between the squadrons and training activity resulted. There were 71,419 officers and 15,458 enlisted men in the Naval Reserve.

When Rear Admiral R. F. Whitehead became CNAResTra in February 1948, 200 squadrons had been commissioned, and their pilots flew nearly a half-million hours. On the ground, 17,000 troops kept the more than 1,500 aircraft flying. The big test came in the fall of 1948 when the reservists, by now nicknamed "weekend warriors," took their WW II-vintage aircraft, including F6F *Hellcats* and F4U *Corsairs*, on their first carrier qualifications since the war. Fifty pilots made a total of 421 carrier landings without incident.

The following year, NAS Squantum sent Carrier Air Group 56 aboard USS *Franklin D. Roosevelt* as the first air group from the New England area to go aboard a carrier. Thirty-seven pilots eventually made 222 landings on FDR. For many, this was their first time at sea as well as the first carrier qualification





An AD Skyraider launches from a carrier's flight deck. The dive and torpedo-bomber served in the Korean War and the Vietnam conflict.

period. Naval Air Reserve activities were not limited just to carriers. In 1949, seven PBY *Catalina* flying boats from Patrol Squadron 69 visited NAS Miami and, for two weeks, conducted independent operations.

By the end of the decade, the Naval Air Reserve was a viable, working organization. In July 1950, it was called upon to serve in yet another conflict, in Korea.

When North Korean forces invaded South Korea, crossing the 38th parallel in late June 1950, they were subjected to attacks by aircraft from the carrier *Valley Forge*, which was patrolling offshore. As the conflict grew in intensity, it was clear that it would not be resolved quickly and, once again, America geared up for a war. One aspect involved the mobilization of selected units and squadrons of the Naval Air Reserve, eventually numbering 84. Over 30,000 reservists eventually were recalled, either voluntarily or involuntarily. Several aviation squadrons volunteered en masse, taking pride in demonstrating their patriotism and preparedness. VF-781 at Los Alamitos, Calif., was the first reserve squadron to volunteer.

Many of the squadrons were still flying obsolete WW II aircraft and, although their services were welcomed, their transition to current aircraft such as the AD *Skyraider* and F9F *Panther* took time. Perhaps the only units which needed little or no training were the squadrons flying the F4U *Corsair*. These fighter-bombers were in great demand. In fact, they served throughout the three-year conflict, not only with the Navy but with the Marines, from carriers and shore bases, by day and night.

As the reserve recall gathered momentum, squadrons manned entirely by reservists flew increasing numbers of sorties against enemy targets. At one time, USS *Bon Homme Richard* was manned entirely by reservists. USS *Boxer*, with reserve squadrons from Olathe, Kans.; Glenview, Ill.; Memphis, Tenn.; and Dallas, Texas, had 90-percent reserve manning, while *Princeton* had 50

percent. The presence of reserve-manned carriers allowed fleet carriers to come off the line for rest and replenishment. In March 1951, the first all-reserve air group took off from *Boxer* to attack targets along the entire front of the 38th parallel. At times, 75 percent of a month's sorties were flown by reserve aircrews.

By the time the last Neptunes were delivered in 1962, the designation P2V-7S had changed to SP-2H (pictured here). As P-3 Orions filled out fleet squadrons, P-2s continued in reserve and support roles.

The reservists flew everything from prop-driven *Skyriders* and patrol planes to the new *Panther* and *Banshee* fighter-bombers.

Famed author James Michener immortalized the Naval Air Reservists in his novel *The Bridges at Toko-ri*, which told the story of Denver lawyer Harry Brubaker who suddenly finds himself flying from a carrier against a little-known enemy, in a little-understood war. The book was made into a poignant moving starring William Holden and Grace

Kelly, as Brubaker's wife. The book addressed several aspects of the reservists' commitment and the question, "Where do we get such men?"

Upon his return from Korea in April 1952, Vice Admiral H. M. Martin, Commander, Naval Air Force, Pacific Fleet, wrote to Rear Admiral L. A. Moebus, CNAResTra:

"I sincerely believe that this country never before has had a reserve so splendidly trained and ready to meet any sudden emergency. I am likewise firmly



An anonymous reservist wrote the following account of his service. In some ways it presents the feeling of many servicemen 15 years later during Vietnam.

I Flew with CAG-101

My name is Smith. Lieutenant Charles Smith, USNR, to be correct. I'm a Naval Aviator just back from Korea. Don't want to talk about it? I thank heaven I'm able to

talk. But you are right. I don't want to talk about myself, particularly. I want to talk about a lot of guys — ground crewmen, enlisted men, and pilots like myself that I met out there.

I made a promise to those guys. It started out as a joke at first. We had a lot of time on our hands while our carrier, *Boxer* was en route to Korea. When they found out that I used to be a newspaperman, they would sit around making up corny headlines like "Local

Barber Trims Commie Jet" or "Merchant Mugs MiG."

You see, we were all reservists, had civilian jobs, a family maybe. There were shoe salesmen, brokers, garage mechanics and, yes, even a barber. Jokingly, I said if I ever got back alive I'd tell the world their story. As it turned out, their story is no joke. Fred Painter did clobber a YAK that jumped him. Fred owns an appliance store. Joe Gino, the barber, put the clippers to several air

convinced that never before has our country realized such dividends from a peacetime training program. It is my sincere hope that we will profit from our experience in Korea and continue to maintain our Naval Air Reserve program at peak efficiency."

The reserves intended to carry out VAdm. Martin's wishes and, as the Korean War came to a close in July 1953, Naval Air Reserve squadrons continued to perform drills and two-week training periods.

VI. 1953-1968: Stability with Transition, Props to Jets

When the reservists returned from service in Korea, the biggest change occurring was the transition from familiar, relatively obsolete propeller-driven aircraft to more modern equipment. Korea had placed a drain on some of the more utilitarian types of prop aircraft such as the *Skyraider* and *Corsair*. While the Marine Air Reserves held on a little longer to the F4U-1, the

Naval Air Reserve made the change to jets sooner. In April 1955, the first F9F *Panthers* joined the Naval Air Reserve Training Command. By the mid-1950s, however, the air reserve had settled into a period of tranquility.

To clarify the recall eligibility of individual reservists, Congress established "ready" and "standby" categories in the Armed Forces Reserve Act of 1952. Ready Reserves could be recalled in an emergency declared war. In addition, categories of "active" and

strips before he was through. But let me tell the story from the beginning.

Like I said, we were members of the Reserve, the Naval Air Reserve. We used to make weekend trips to the nearest naval air station to maintain our flight proficiency and keep our hands in. Some of us got paid, some didn't. The money didn't matter much.

Sure, we know we stood a good chance of being called in the event of an emergency or a war. But we got back with the old gang, told sea stories, and had a chance to fly or fool around with the planes. Then the training started getting tougher, our flight syllabus kept getting tighter. There was less time for sea stories or coffee after a flight. Toward the end they were really piling it on us. I guess we all knew it was just a matter of time.

I got my orders in the middle of July. I had just taken the family to the mountains. I had 24 hours to report. It was the same with the rest. I found out later that more than 3,100 guys like myself had received similar orders. Twenty-four hours later they were all there. Their businesses, their homes, their families had been left behind. They didn't know where they were going, or exactly what they were going to do. They did know they were ready.

How does a guy feel? What goes through his mind, especially if he has a wife and a couple of kids? I remember the tight feeling in my throat and a knot in my stomach. My hands were sweaty, too. I remember saying to myself, "This is it."

Yes. my wife Alice cried a little. She tried hard not to but women are like that. The kids didn't know what it meant. I could see the question marks in their eyes along with the tears. I knew I'd miss them.

It was harder to go this time, yes, a

million times harder. Sure, I flew with the Navy in WW II but I was young. The wide blue yonder was a challenge, a challenge to youth. I accepted it eagerly. This time there was no challenge.

I had no desire to feel a thousand horses pulling me through the air, or the wind clutching my flight jacket. I wanted to laugh and say it was all a big joke. Only it wasn't. Somebody somewhere needed me. I remember I felt like a policeman when I pinned my wings on my greens.

Sure I could have requested a deferment and probably gotten it, so could the rest of them. But they didn't. Don't ask me why. A man must live with himself, I guess.

But there we were on board USS *Boxer* heading for Korea and God knows what. The intensive training we had received was behind us. It was the first time in Naval Aviation history that an all-reserve squadron had struck back at the enemy. The eyes of an anxious nation were on us.

Some time later we joined *Princeton* and *Valley Forge*, as part of Task Force 77. There were humorous little parodies by the "Happy Valley" boys and bits of verse from the "Sweet Pea." With appropriate ceremony, *Boxer* was dubbed the "Busy Bee." We had joined a great team.

The din of this brief welcome still rang in our ears as we prepared to launch our first aerial attack. No longer "weekend warriors," we were members of Carrier Air Group 101 and part of the Navy, the fighting Navy!

I'm not going to bore you with a long war story. The record of the "Busy Bee" and the Naval Air Reservists that served on her speaks for itself.

Members of VF-721, VA-702. VF-791 and VF-884 were in the air more than 20,000 hours and flew over 8,000 sorties against the enemy. Seven thousand

enemy casualties resulted. These "butchers, bakers and candlestick makers" virtually pulverized bridges, railroads and troop concentrations from the 38th parallel to the muddy Yalu.

Their *Corsairs*, *Skyriders* and *Panthers* gladdened the hearts of ground troops as they flew in close air support, or their napalm tanks sent seething flame over advance enemy positions. For seven months, these Naval Air Reservists carried the fight to the enemy.

They're home now, or back in the States, just like I am. They left behind them a wonderful record. A record for Naval Air Reservists of *Bon Homme Richard* and *Antietam* to shoot at as they take our place on the team.

Perhaps this message from Commander Air Forces, Pacific Fleet will illustrate what I mean:

"The members of the former reserve squadrons of Carrier Air Group 101 have earned the admiration and gratitude of both the Navy and the nation for their magnificent performance of duty while conducting combat operations against the enemy in Korea. Despite losses suffered from the constantly increasing accuracy and intensity of the enemy's antiaircraft fire, you have maintained the aggressiveness that characterized our fighting men, and seven thousand enemy casualties attest to the vigor and determination of your attack. My congratulations to each officer and man for his part in the splendid record the Group has established. Vice Admiral T. L. Sprague."

That's the story of Joe Gino, barber; Fred Painter, merchant; and a host of others just like them. I'm proud to tell the story of these "modern minutemen."

There's Alice with the kids. Guess what? We're going to the mountains! ■

“inactive” determined the status of reservists in certain programs. Active status reserves were those participating in accredited training programs, and inactive referred to those not participating in any training.

Because reservists make their livings like other civilians, it was necessary to make the training convenient and some reserve activities provided airlifts, if warranted, a practice which continues to the present day.

Besides the actual bases which served as training facilities, various supporting and administrative units were created, such as air wing staffs, auxiliary air units and auxiliary ground units.

Although transition to jets would eventually come in the very early 1960s, the Naval Air Reserve in the 1950s still made due with prop types, including the AD *Skyraider*, P4Y *Privateer* for patrol duties and the R5D four-engine transport. PV-2 *Venturas* and P2V *Neptunes* occasionally supplemented the roster. An odd type which found its way into Naval Air Reserve service was the Grumman AF *Guardian*, a unique approach to carrier-based ASW, arriving at NAS Oakland, Calif., in December 1952. The AF served for several years in the reserves.

By conducting training on weekends, civilian employment did not have to be disrupted. Some reservists still had to use their vacation time, however, to participate in the two-week active duty periods. But most employees allowed their double-citizens extra time, just as most do today.

Following Korea, the reserves continued to drill, and were not recalled to active duty again until the fall of 1961.

When the communists threw up a wall in the divided city of Berlin, thereby challenging the 16-year-old agreement of the freedom of the city squarely placed in East Germany, Soviet territory, the U.S. called 3,600 Naval Air Reservists in 18 squadrons to active duty. Although the units remained in the country, the show of resolve apparently impressed the Soviets and the world in general.

Carl Vinson, then Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, said, “These reserves were ordered to active duty to prevent a war, not fight a war. They were called to meet the crisis and it is to their everlasting credit that they met

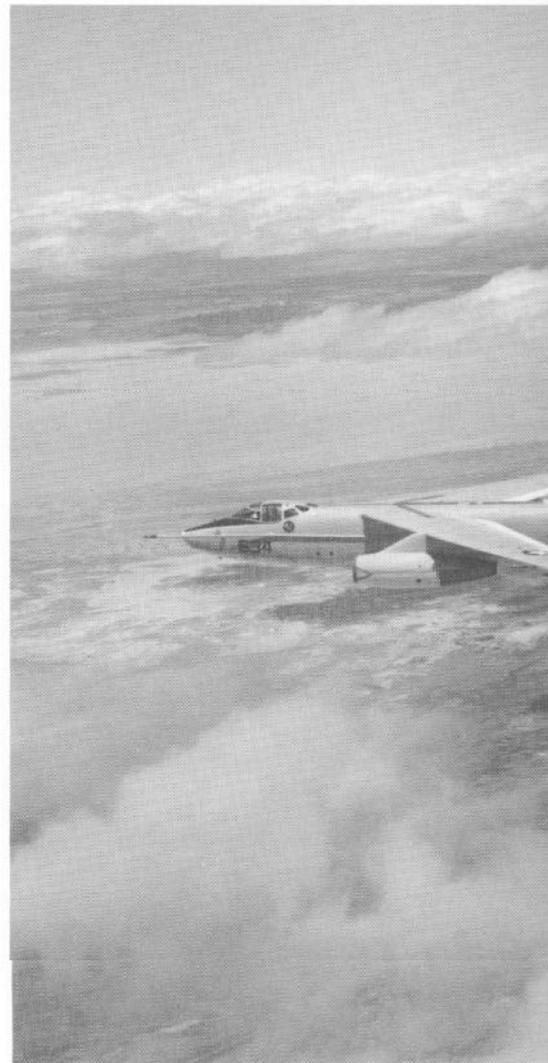
Two RF-8G Crusaders of VFP-306 fly formation with a KA-3B tanker from VAK-308 in 1983. Though the VAK squadrons continue to provide aerial refueling services, VFP-306 was disestablished in 1984 and its sister unit, VFP-206, will be disestablished in early 1987.

the crisis head-on.”

The Berlin crisis was the first time the 1959 integration of the Naval Air Reserves into the Selected Reserve had been exercised. The integration had made all Naval Air Reservists eligible for active duty within hours after the commencement of the emergency. During this time, the emphasis for the reserves swung away from fighter and attack training to ASW and, as a result, several reserve units transitioned to the relatively modern Grumman S2F *Tracker* and later models of the P2V *Neptune*.

The Naval Air Reserve remained active throughout the mid-1960s, attending to various crises, and training on their aging equipment. Most of the tactical reserves had made the transition to jets, the most modern equipment being the F-1 (or FJ in pre-1962 designation) *Fury*, a derivative of the F-86 series. In fact, the *Fury* had arrived in the reserves as early as 1948, when the Oakland reserves acquired several FJ-1s. Other types included the F-2 *Banshee* (nee F2H) and F-9 *Cougar*, all representing first-generation jet technology of the mid to late 1940s. The fleet was working with the new McDonnell F-4 *Phantom* and late models of the A-4 *Skyhawk*, having retired several types such as the McDonnell F-3 *Demon*, an underpowered behemoth whose potential was never fully realized.

Even as the devastating decade of direct American involvement in Southeast Asia approached, there was little thought given to updating the equipment of the Naval Air Reserve, or any of the various reserve components. Even when the August 1964 Gulf of Tonkin incident brought full participation by American fleet forces, it would be four more years before the reserves were directly tested and steps taken to change the makeup of the program. Surprisingly, as huge an effort as Vietnam was to become, the Naval Air Reserve had very little direct participation, aside from some initial transport runs to South Vietnam in 1966. Of course, many of the aircrews joining the Navy were reservists on active duty, but not the true “weekend warrior”



recalled reservists. Vietnam was to be largely an active duty affair.

VII. Reorganization and Revitalization in the 1970s

Cruising the Korean coast in January 1968, the light cargo ship USS *Pueblo* seemed to have nothing to do with the U.S. Naval Air Reserve. But, when the ship was captured and boarded by North Korean sailors on January 23, the seizure set off a chain of events which eventually affected the reserves in a dynamic fashion. In addition to the immediate reaction of sending a fleet carrier task force up into the Sea of Japan toward the Korean Peninsula, away from its normal duty off Vietnam, U.S. President Lyndon Johnson also mobilized six Naval Air Reserve carrier squadrons. The *Pueblo* incident settled into a typical cycle of condemnation and rebuttal from both sides, and lost in the more sensational



headlines was the fact that the reserves were having trouble.

For several years, the reservists had flown obsolete aircraft and now the time factor in upgrading to fleet-comparable models was slowing down the speed at which the squadrons readied themselves for integration into the fleet. It was embarrassing as well as counterproductive. Fighter units struggling at NAS Jacksonville, Fla., were hopelessly lost in transitioning to the newer versions of the F-8 *Crusader*. By September, with the diminished state of the crisis, and the lack of readiness displayed by the reserve squadrons, the six units were released from active duty. But the lesson on the state of preparedness of the reserves was not lost and plans were immediately initiated to change the program.

The major thrust of the plan was to create a mirror image of the fleet. On April 1, 1970, two Reserve Carrier Air Wings (CVWRs) were commissioned —

CVWRs 20 and 30. (In addition, two short-lived wings were commissioned for ASW carrier use — CVSGRs 70 and 80.) The reorganization placed all carrier-type squadrons in two reserve carrier air wings and two carrier ASW groups. Twelve patrol (VP) and three transport (VR) squadrons were also part of the reorganization. It was an ambitious plan, but one whose time had come. It provided a chance for the reserves to operate the same aircraft the fleet did, thereby hopefully allowing the reservists to maintain currency in their type in the event of mobilization.

The CVWRs were composed of eight squadrons, similar to the fleet air wings: two fighter (VF); three attack (VA); one light photoreconnaissance (VFP); one carrier airborne early warning (VAW); and one tactical electronic warfare (VAQ), later aerial refueling (VAK). An additional squadron, the VAQ EW unit, made its appearance in the early 1980s.

The aircraft with which to equip the new squadrons of the CVWRs were drawn from current stocks and included F-8H *Crusaders*, A-4L *Skyhawks*, RF-8G photo-*Crusaders*, E-1B *Tracers* and KA-3B *Skywarriors*. Physical location of the squadrons was more centralized. Those squadrons belonging to CVWR-20, which would deploy to the Atlantic Fleet, were situated at East Coast naval air stations such as NAS Atlanta, Ga.; NAF Washington, D.C.; and NAS Cecil Field, Fla. CVWR-30's squadrons, slated for Pacific Fleet deployment in the event of mobilization, were located on the West Coast, at NASs Miramar, Lemoore, Point Mugu and Alameda, Calif. There was one exception, one which was never changed. VFP-306, CVWR-30's light photoreconnaissance squadron, equipped with RF-8Gs, was based at NAF Washington, along with its sister squadron, VFP-206. Although attention was occasionally given to relocating VFP-306 on the West Coast, the change was never seriously considered, and the squadron remained near the nation's capital during its entire 14-year existence.

The reorganization of the Naval Air Reserve in 1970 was hailed as a major milestone. The reserves now truly mirrored the fleet, and could be recalled as entire organizational wings, ready to deploy in a crisis. No longer would individual squadrons, or even personnel, be subject to recall. The table of administrative organization was exactly like the fleet, complete with an air group commander, always a regular Navy senior commander or junior captain.

Another advantage of the reserve air wing concept was that the entire wing would perform the regular annual two-week active duty for training (AcDuTra) as a unit, thereby providing an opportunity for the wing to come together at least once a year and operate as it was intended.

The first order of business was to conduct carrier qualifications with its new aircraft. Accordingly, squadrons of CVWR-30 went out to the carrier *Roosevelt* (CVA-42) in late 1970. Operations went smoothly, especially since many of the members of the squadrons were recently-returned Vietnam veterans with considerable operational and combat experience in

their particular aircraft.

After carrier qualifications, the wings deployed to several sites, such as the weapons training range at NAS Fallon, Nev., 60 miles east of Reno. Fallon's limited facilities necessitated many of the squadrons staging from NAS Miramar's photo facilities which provided developing services for the aircraft's cameras and film. This situation was remedied in 1977 when Fallon installed the necessary film processing equipment, allowing the VFPs to remain at Fallon during the period of deployment.

This H-3 from HS-84 gets a steady and professional hand from a crewman during in-flight refueling. The reserves have been flying the Sea King since the early seventies when four reserve squadrons received SH-3Hs.



By the mid-seventies, the squadrons of the CVWRs had begun to receive even more modern aircraft in the form of the F-4 *Phantom* and A-7 *Corsair*. An earlier attempt to include the *Phantom* in the reserves at a California site in 1970 proved abortive and it was not until 1974 that the first war-weary F-4Bs made their appearance in VFs 301 and 302 at NAS Miramar. The Marine Air Reserve also accepted its first F-4Bs at this time. The attack squadrons, based at Point Mugu, Lemoore and Alameda, exchanged their A-4s for A-7As, and eventually A-7Bs. With colorful markings applied to their aircraft — recalling the 1930s when multicolored aircraft populated the fleet and reserves — the Naval Air Reserve had finally begun to achieve a measure of parity with the fleet.

The apparent success of the reserve wing concept was such that a wing was deployed with a fleet carrier for a short time, and the CVWR assumed the role of the ship's actual dedicated wing. Thus, CVWR-30's AcDuTra period began in November 1976 and, for a continuous period of seven days, operated from USS *Ranger* (CV-61).

The success of the *Ranger* deployment encouraged the reserve air wings to participate in various exercises, as well as to travel farther afield from their bases.

Of course, besides the more glamorous tactical jet airwings, the remainder of the Naval Air Reserve — the patrol and helicopter wings — had also received updated equipment with the reorganization. In the early 1970s, although many VP squadrons still flew the venerable P-2E *Neptune*, the transition to the P-3A *Orion* was well under way, and units in Massachusetts, Glenview, Jacksonville and Moffett Field took advantage of the greatly increased capabilities of their new aircraft. Patrol Squadron 91 accepted the first P-3As in November 1970.

The HS squadrons, with their ASW mission, gained the H-3 *Sea King*. Two unique squadrons, HAL-4 and HAL-5, were formed to operate the HH-1K, a gunship version of the ubiquitous *Huey* of Vietnam fame. Loosely descended from HAL-3, which operated various armed versions of the *Huey* from 1967 to 1972 in Vietnam, the reserve HALs also incorporated training in terrorist control and special operations in their overall mission. Formed in 1975, HC-9 remains unique as the only dedicated combat search and rescue helicopter squadron in the Navy, fleet or reserve. Flying a specially modified version of the H-3 — the HH-3A — California-based HC-9 trains for a mission practically "invented" by the Vietnam war rescue of downed flight crewmen in hostile environments.

A major administrative change to come from the revamping of the reserves was the consolidation of the headquarters for the two large components, air and surface reserve. Prior to the consolidation, which officially occurred on February 1, 1973, the surface reserves had been administered from facilities in Omaha, Neb. — the reasoning being that this site was approximately in the middle of the country — while the Naval Air Reserve had its headquarters at NAS Glenview, Ill., near Chicago. While

this arrangement was satisfactory, a consolidation was deemed necessary to go with the new organization and, accordingly, New Orleans was chosen as the location for the new command.

Chapter VIII: The 1980s, Present and Future

The Naval Air Reserve entered the 1980s on a definite upswing, as did much of the military. The ridiculous stigma attached to military service imposed by the long, frustrating war in Southeast Asia was slowly beginning to disappear, especially coupled with a rising unemployment rate in the public sector. Years of neglect, fostered by Vietnam and perpetuated by a bumbling, inept political leadership in the last half of the 1970s, had crippled not only the active duty forces but the reserves as well.

An open arms policy where the U.S. became a haven for not only bonafide refugees from Haiti, Vietnam, Cambodia and Cuba but for the dregs of these countries' societies — criminals, drug addicts and activists — further eroded this country's already shaky standing in the world arena.

It took a shattering event in November 1979 — the seizure of over 50 U.S. citizens by radical elements in the strife-torn country of Iran, once a staunch U.S. ally — to bring the American people together as a nation once more. And with the drastically changed political climate, which the long, so-called hostage crisis brought, liberal politics that had so badly damaged the U.S. capacity to act decisively were given up for the more conservative politics of the Ronald Reagan administration. Thus, as the leadership of the country changed hands in January 1981, coinciding with the emotional return of the remaining 51 Iranian-held American hostages, the U.S. quickly began rebuilding its crippled military capability. And included within this massive rebirth was funding for the Naval Air Reserve.

The main thrust centered on new equipment. The basic reorganization of 1970 was found to be a viable program. What was needed in the 1980s was complete parity with the fleet. Even during the periodic bursts of updating, such as the early 1970s, the reserves still operated aircraft which were in the early stages of retirement from the fleet. The F-4B and A-7A/B are good examples. Obsolescent, not obsolete, but approaching it.

Actually some modernization had continued. The ancient E-1B *Tracers* had been replaced by E-2 *Hawkeyes*. VAW-88 of CVWR-30 received its first aircraft in time to take them on AcDuTra in October 1977. The F-4Bs of VFs 201, 202, 301 and 302 had been exchanged for F-4Ns, and a new squadron had joined the CVWRs — the VAQ which operated EA-6As, two-seat, specially-modified A-6 *Intruders*. VAQ-209 assigned to CVWR-20, flew from NAS Norfolk, Va., and VAQ-309, operating with CVWR-30, was based at Whidbey Island, Wash., (The VAQ designation had been used by the KA-3B tanker squadrons 208 and 308, but was always something of a misnomer since, aside from occasional path-finding navigational duties on long transoceanic flights, the big, twin-jet KA-3Bs "Whales" had only one mission: aerial refueling. Therefore, with the establishment of the more properly-equipped EA-6A units, the VAQ electronic warfare designation was reassigned. The aerial refuelers became VAKs.)

One problem which began to appear in the early eighties, and which threatened to virtually cripple a major portion of the reserve tactical community, involved the engines for the A-7Bs which equipped six reserve light attack squadrons. Basically, the problem was one of age, which translated into unreliability and no airplanes. Indeed, the problem was so acute by 1983 that the planned CVWR-30 AcDuTra in May at NAS Fallon, including an operational readiness inspection, was nearly cancelled due to the nonavailability of the wing's A-7s. In any event, the cruise was greatly modified, allowing two to three A-7s from each squadron to use those engines which were still operational to fly to Fallon, and the inspection was cancelled.

The Naval Air Reserve was embarrassed and frustrated. Again, what seemed a good program, manned by experienced and willing people, was being damaged by the age of its equipment. The decision was made to bring the A-7E into the reserves and, in a landmark decision, to allow transition to the spanking new F/A-18 *Hornet*. VA-303, based at NAS Alameda, Calif., was designated as the first Naval Air Reserve F/A-18 squadron. The Naval Air Reserve was to receive first-line equipment for the first time in its nearly 70-year existence. Redesignated VFA-303, the squadron formally accepted its first *Hornet* on October 19, 1985, after a two-

year transition program in conjunction with VFA-125, the West Coast fleet readiness squadron. In addition, the fighter squadrons would transition to the F-14 *Tomcat*, nearly bringing to a close the incredible career of the F-4 *Phantom*. It was a clean sweep by a new broom.

Viewed from a political standpoint, there were several aspects of this tremendous influx, not the least of which was the new prominence of the military as a whole, and the somewhat unusual designation of an active Naval Air Reservist as Secretary of the Navy. John Lehman was quickly confirmed in 1981 and became one of the most active secretaries in the history of the office. A young, dynamic man in his late thirties, Lehman was then also a Lieutenant Commander and a designated A-6 bombardier/navigator who drilled at NAS Oceana with VA-42, the A-6 fleet replacement squadron. At last, the Naval Air Reserve, indeed the Navy, had a champion who understood the service's needs and organization. Lehman, of course, brought new visibility to the Naval Air Reserve, providing the thrust for new programs and equipment.

In June 1983, VAW-78 accepted its first E-2C, a significant increase in mission capability and a major step toward fleet parity for the reserves. The value of training reservists in so sophisticated an aircraft as the E-2C was quickly realized when a number of VAW-78 crewmen volunteered for Christmas duty in the eastern Mediterranean to augment the E-2 squadrons already on station in that troubled area. The fleet squadrons were facing an acute manpower shortage and the arrival of trained reserve replacements, ready to go, helped relieve the strain during the intense period of operations. In addition, VAW-78 received the Meritorious Unit Commendation for its part in providing surveillance resources for the government's ongoing antidrug campaign.

Continuing with modernization plans. VF-301 at NAS Miramar, accepted its first F-14 on October 1, 1984. A day earlier, in ceremonies at NAF Washington, D.C., VFP-306 was disestablished, the first Naval Air Reserve squadron to do so since the massive 1970 reorganization. The requirement for reconnaissance would be assumed by VF-301's *Tomcats* which would carry the tactical air reconnaissance pod system (TARPS). Thus, VFP-306's 27-Year-old RF-8G



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Crusaders were retired, leaving VFP-206 as the sole operator of the *Crusader* in the Navy until March 30, 1987. On this date, VFP-206 was disestablished and the last U.S. Navy RF-8G made its final flight.

VF-301 quickly brought itself up to operational readiness with its new mount, conducting the first carrier qualifications in February 1985 aboard USS *Kitty Hawk* (CV-63). As Rear Admiral C. J. Kempf, Chief of Naval Reserve, wrote "What is happening...is a major step toward horizontal integration...[The F-14]...is an airplane that is identical to fleet equipment...Reserve fighter squadrons will soon be able to deploy to fleet carriers as units..."

CVWR-20 emulated the 1976 *Ranger* deployment of CVWR-30 when the entire wing deployed aboard USS *Eisenhower* (CVN-69) in September 1985. During their two-week AcDuTra, the squadrons of CVWR-20 accumulated over 1,000 arrested landings.

A new addition to the Naval Air Reserve program was the creation of Squadron Augment Units (SAUs). Designed to create a pool of trained reservists, the SAUs provide personnel to augment fleet squadrons to wartime manning should the need arise. In addition, the SAU reservists drill with their designated unit or the parent fleet

squadron, as well as fly the fleet squadron's aircraft to maintain proficiency. SAUs are particularly valuable where not enough aircraft are available to create an individual reserve squadron, such as the F-14 or A-6. Thus, although the introduction of the F-14 into the Naval Air Reserve has been accomplished, those reservists trained in the *Tomcat* drill with the Oceana-based SAUs which fly aircraft belonging to VF-101, the East Coast F-14 fleet readiness squadron (FRS). In addition, A-6 SAU members fly VA-42 A-6Es, augmenting the East Coast A-6 FRS.

Other components of the Naval Air Reserve are benefitting from modernization. In a similar program to the SAU, the maritime patrol squadrons are bringing the Reserve Master Augment Unit (MAU) into operation. The latest versions of the P-3C have been available only to fleet squadrons, leaving the reserve units based throughout the country to fly older, less capable A and B models, albeit with some updates incorporated. With the invention of the MAU concept, reservists in designated areas, such as Brunswick, Maine, fly the latest P-3Cs, and would report directly to their sponsoring squadron if mobilized.

Reserve VP duties take members all over the world, filling in occasionally for

Left, two F-4s Phantoms of VF-202 fly near their base at NAS Dallas. VF-202 and VF-201, the other Texas-based reserve fighter squadron, transitioned to the F-14 in 1987. Top, a TA-4J from Oceana-based VC-12. VCs 12 and 13 provide valuable adversary services to fleet and reserve squadrons. Above, VAQ-309 flies the EA-6A, the electronic countermeasures version of the veteran Intruder.

regular Navy VP squadrons, as far away as Spain and Japan. During the summer of 1984, four squadrons from Reserve Patrol Wing, Pacific took turns flying tours in Japan.

VPs 65, 67, 69 and 91 each flew their P-3Bs out of Misawa for one-month periods. The reserve *Orions* supplemented the resources of VP-48, the fleet VP squadron.

The reserve helicopter community has experienced changes, also. The two HS reserve squadrons, flying SH-3Ds, were redesignated HSL-84 and 85 and, in March 1984, HSL-84 traded its SH-3Ds for SH-2Fs which are part of the LAMPS MK I ASW system. HSL-74, based at NAS South Weymouth, Mass., also acquired SH-2Fs in January 1985.

Perhaps the most successful, though not as well-known nor as glamorous, story in the "new" Naval Air Reserve involves the transport squadrons, VRs.

With the retirement of the last prop-driven C-118 four-engine transports in 1985, the Navy's VR squadrons are responsible for all the movement of personnel and logistical supplies, except for deliveries to aircraft carriers. Beginning with the 1970 reorganization, the reserve transport program gradually saw the introduction of the C-9, the Navy version of the McDonnell Douglas C-9 twin-jet airliner. Eleven reserve fleet logistics support squadrons make up the complement of the Fleet Logistics Support Wing, based at NAS New Orleans, La. In addition to the VRs, two fleet composite squadrons (VCs), flying A-4 *Skyhawks*, supply adversarial resources to various Navy squadrons.

The VRs proved invaluable during the hectic October 1983 actions in Grenada and Lebanon which necessitated using C-9s from Norfolk-based VR-56. In Grenada, VR-56 C-9s landed at Point Saline Airfield carrying the invasion force commander, Rear Admiral Joseph Metcalf, and his staff to the staging area. With another aircraft from VR-58, NAS Jacksonville, VR-56 flew the staff into the Cuban-built airfield at night and were, thus, the first fixed-wing aircraft to

land at Point Saline during the Grenada operation. VR-58 crews also flew the Cuban prisoners captured during the invasion of Grenada to Mexico to be eventually repatriated.

Only a few days after the Grenada conflict, VR-56 was again called on to transport wounded Marine survivors home from the bombing of their barracks in Beirut, Lebanon. With this impressive record of accomplishment during 1983, it was not surprising that VR-56 won the Noel Davis Trophy with Battle E for 1983.

Thus, as the U.S. Naval Air Reserve begins its eighth decade of organized service, and enters the last half of the 1980s, there are signs that it is finally within reach of attaining its goal of comparability to the fleet, both administratively and operationally.

The Naval Reserve is even part of space exploration. On October 1, 1983, the Naval Space Command was established at Dahlgren, Va., long the site of Navy-sponsored testing and evaluation. The new command was created to support the Navy's role in the ongoing national space programs. A reserve component was then created, headed by Captain S. David Griggs,

USNR-R. U.S. Naval Reserve Naval Space Command 0166, formed in January 1985 at Dahlgren, supports the parent command. Captain Griggs is an astronaut who flew in the space shuttle *Discovery*, mission 51D, April 12-19, 1985.

With the continuing introduction of fleet-comparable equipment, and requirements to use the new aircraft in exercises and surveillance programs, the Naval Air Reserve is much different from its earlier counterparts. The traditional public image of the Air Reserve as a flying club for airline pilots is changing. Those people involved directly with the squadrons have always known the truth. With six air wings, supporting facilities and thousands of personnel, the Naval Air Reserve is a major part of the overall Navy strength. Rear Admiral Tommie F. Rinard, Commander, Naval Air Reserve Force, summed it up when he wrote:

"Never has the readiness of the Naval Air Reserve Force been at a higher level. From the pilot who is training in the F/A-18 to the yeoman at a Naval Air Reserve Center, the Selected Reservist...is better trained and more professional than at any time in the history of the Naval Air Reserve." ■



The C-9B Skytrain II transport supports the logistics requirements of reserve and fleet squadrons.

