



Cadet at Admiral Billard Academy - 1942

**Frederic T. Watts Jr., COL, USMC (Ret.)**  
 "Fearless"

Date of Designation: 1 October 1943 P6642

Dates of Active Duty: October 1942 - 1 September 1970

Total Flight Hours: 6,0705

Carrier/Ship Landings: Fixed wing: 227

Approximate Flight Hours:

Jet: 2,470 Prop: 3,600 VF/VA: 5,000

Combat Tours:

WW II: VMF-513, USS *Vella Gulf* (CVE-111), Jun. 1945  
 Sep. 1945 (F4U-1D) - 20 missions.

Korea: VMF-311, K-3, May 1952-Oct. 1952 (F9F-2) -  
 73 missions.

Vietnam: MAG-11, 1st MAW, Chu Lai, RVN (F4B) - 118  
 missions.

Aviation Commands:

CO, 57th Fighter Interceptor Squadron (F-89), Presque Isle  
 AFB, Mar.-Oct. 1954

CO, VMF(AW)-323, CV-16 WestPac, Apr. 1961-Jul. 1962

Combat Awards:

Distinguished Flying Cross  
 Bronze Star with combat "V"  
 12 Air Medals  
 Purple Heart

**Duty Assignment Chronology**

10/42-1/43 USNPFS Chapel Hill, NC.  
 1/43-7/43 NAS Anacostia, E-base.  
 7/43-9/43 NAS Pensacola  
 10/43-12/43 NAS Deland, FL. Op. Trng- SBD.  
 1/44-8/44 VMF(N)-534, MCAS Cherry Point,  
 (F6F-3N), and VMF-513 (F4U).  
 9/44-4/45 VMF-513, MCAS, Santa Barbara, CA. (F4U).



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5/45-10/45 VMF-513, USS *Vella Gulf*, (F4U).  
 10/45-7/46 Inactive  
 7/46 Returned to active duty, MCAS, Cherry Point.  
 8/46-1/47 LSO School, NAS Jax and Pensacola.  
 1/47-5/48 VMF-212 MCAS, Cherry Point. Squadron  
 LSO (F4U).  
 6/48-11/50 VMF-115, MCAS, Ewa, TH, Edenton, NC.  
 Ordnance Off. and Sqdn. LSO. (F4U & F9F).  
 11/50-5/52 VMF-224, MCAS Cherry Point (F2H-2) and,  
 USS *FDR* (CV-42).  
 6/52-11/52, VMF-311, K-3, ROK (F9F-2)  
 1/53-9/53 VMF-312, MCAS, Miami. (F9F-4) LSO.  
 10/53-9/54 57th FIS, Presque Isle AFB. (F-89C/D) XO  
 and CO.  
 10/54-7/55 Ass't G-3, 2d MAW, Cherry Pt. (FJ-2) Op.  
 Readiness Insp./Wing LSO.  
 8/55-6/56 MCB, Quantico. Amphibious Warfare School.  
 8/56-8/58 FMF-PAC, Ass't G-3 for Air. (FJ-2 & 4) at  
 MCAS, Kaneohe.  
 9/58-11/59 MAG-11, 1st MAW, Atsugi & Ping Tung N.,  
 ROC. Asst S-3. Group LSO, Qual'ed one FJ-  
 4, and two F4D squadrons on the Lady Lex  
 without incident. LSO qual'ed in both types.  
 Flew FJ-4, F4D, F8U.  
 12/59-6/61 VMF-451, MCAS, El Toro. Ops Off. (F8U-1),  
 7/61-7/62 CO, VMF(AW) 323 (F8U-2N) Nov. 1961-  
 May 1962, CV-16, WestPac.  
 9/62-6/63 Bootstrap University of Omaha.  
 7/63-7/65 Los Angeles Air Defence Sector. Operations  
 Officer. Combat Qual'ed in F-106  
 8/65-6/66 U.S. Naval War College.  
 7/66-6/67 XO, MAG-11, 1st MAW, RVN (F4B) 118  
 missions.  
 7/67-9/70 Senior Marine, Staff US Army War College  
 9/1/7070 Retired from active duty.  
 9/70-7/72. Studied toward PhD, International Relations,  
 University of South Carolina.  
 8/72-7/86 Assoc. Prof to Professor, Political Science,  
 Chair, Department of Social Sciences, Elon  
 College NC.

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### **Summary of Significant Career Events**

(1) Being accepted for flight school, at 18, as 1 of 100 selected from 1,000 candidates, certainly was a defining factor in my first career. The big day was pinning on the gold wings and bars at Pensacola.

(2) I have always attributed learning to bomb because of operational training in SBDs, even though I was disappointed not to have gone to F4U operational.

(3) When I returned to active duty in 1946, as a “newboy” in the squadron I was picked to fill a school quota to LSO School. As it turned out, becoming an LSO, put me in, and helped keep me in many squadrons. Seems as though someone always needed an LSO. When I became the CO of VMF-323 and we were designated to replace a Navy squadron for a WestPac cruise my carrier experience helped me instill confidence in my “first time” carrier pilots.

(4) I was also fortunate to be in VMF-115 when we became the first squadron to receive a full complement of first line jets- F9F-2s.

(5) When I returned from Korea, and was selected for the Air Force exchange program in the Air Defense Command, I had the opportunity to observe a sister service at first hand and become combat qualified in the F-89C & D. I also was privileged to be given command of the squadron (57th FIS).

(6) As all my staff jobs were in operations I had a legitimate reason to be checked out in any, and all, available a/c. I found that most squadron commanders and group commanders were sympathetic to someone who wished to remain current in the first line a/c. As a result I was able to fly all but two of the fighter a/c that the Marine Corps had during my twenty-seven years on active duty and become carrier qualified in six of them.

(7) In 1963, I was assigned to the Los Angeles Air Defense Sector (LAADS) as the Marine Corps Liaison Officer with the responsibility of coordinating Marine assets at El Toro with the West Coast Air Defense program. In addition, I was made Sector Operations Officer. During my two years at LAADS I received credit for guiding the Sector through its first successful annual ORE. I was able, also, to become combat qualified in the F-106, flying out of George AFB.

(8) When I reported to the First MAW in Vietnam, fresh from the Naval War College and only NATOPS current in the T1J, I asked for, and received, permission to spend a week in Japan, where I was able to become NATOPS qualified in the A4 and the F8 before reporting “in country”. As it turned out I was assigned as XO of MAG 13, equipped with F4Bs, in which I flew 118 combat missions.

(9) Upon return from Vietnam, I spent three years as the Senior Marine on the staff and faculty of the Army War College. Another opportunity to observe a sister service first hand and to refresh myself on the strengths and weaknesses of the United States in regard to our strategic position and capabilities.

(10) I retired in 1970 and began studies at the U. of South Carolina toward a PhD in International Studies. I was hired as an Associate Professor of Political Science at Elon College, NC, in 1972. While at Elon I was promoted to Professor and, for eight years, was the Chairman of The Department of Social Sciences.

(11) I retired from Elon in 1986, and moved to the Pinehurst area.