



Cook Cleland, Captain, USN (Ret.)

Date of Designation: August 1941 NA # 8423
Jet Pilot # 40

Dates of Active Duty: November 1940 - September 1945
January 1951 - September 1976

Total Flight Hours: 15,870

Carrier/Ship Landings: Fixed wing: all in war time.

Approximate Flight Hours:
Jet: 210 Prop: 15,540 Helo: 120 VF/VA: 2,000

Combat Tours:
WW II: VS-72, USS *Wasp* (CV-7), Scotland Jan.-Jun. 1942
VS-72, USS *Wasp* (CV-7), Guadalcanal. *Wasp*
sunk 15 September 1942.
WW II: VB-16, USS *Lexington* (CV-16), Nov. 1942 - Jun.
1944. *Lexington* torpedoed but not sunk.
Korea: VF-653, USS *Valley Forge* (CV-45), 1951 - 1952.

Aviation Commands:
CO, VF-653, USS *Valley Forge* (CV-45), 1951 - 1952.
CO, Squadron II, Pensacola FL., 1952 - 1953 (250 SNJ's)

Combat Awards:
Navy Cross
2 Distinguished Flying Crosses
Bronze Star with Combat "V"
9 Air Medals
Purple Heart



Summary of Significant Career Events

- (1) Flew the Navy's first jet aircraft (the Navy had only one machine in inventory at NATC Patuxent River, MD).
- (2) Dropped a 1,000 pounder on a Jap carrier.
- (3) Shot down 5 Japanese aircraft (3 Zeros) with an SBD. Made Ace. (Gunner got 4 more).
- (4) Sunk on USS *Wasp*, Guadalcanal, September 15, 1942.
- (5) Shot down over North Korea off USS *Valley Forge* (CV-45) and was rescued.
- (6) Flew the ME-109, Fockwolf 190, and the Japanese Kate, Zero and Tony aircraft.
- (7) Flew Thompson Trophy Race 1946 - 1949. Won it in 1947 and 1949.
- (8) Flew and owned Cook Cleland Airways converted PBV-5A's flying into Canada and Alaska, 1949-1950.