



Edmond P. Hartsock, COL, USMC (Ret.)
 “Ed”

Date of Designation: 18 July 1942 NA # 15,966

Dates of Active Duty: 4 Dec. 1941-30 Sep. 1966

Total Military Flight Hours: 4,257

Carrier/Ship Landings: Fixed wing: 132

Approximate Flight Hours:

Jet: 717 Prop: 3,524 VF/VA: 4,046

VR/VP: 195 Other (Civilian): 2,942

Combat Tours:

WW II: First F4U-1 squadron, Guadalcanal, Jan. 1943-Sep. 1943 - 88 combat missions.

WW II: USS *Essex* (CV-9) with Air group 4, 5th Fleet; F4Us, Dec. 1944-Apr. 1954 - 26 combat missions.

Korea: Aboard 2 CVEs in the Yellow Sea; F4U-1D aircraft, Mar. 1952-Dec. 1952 - 64 missions.

Total WW II and Korea combat missions - 178

Aviation Commands:

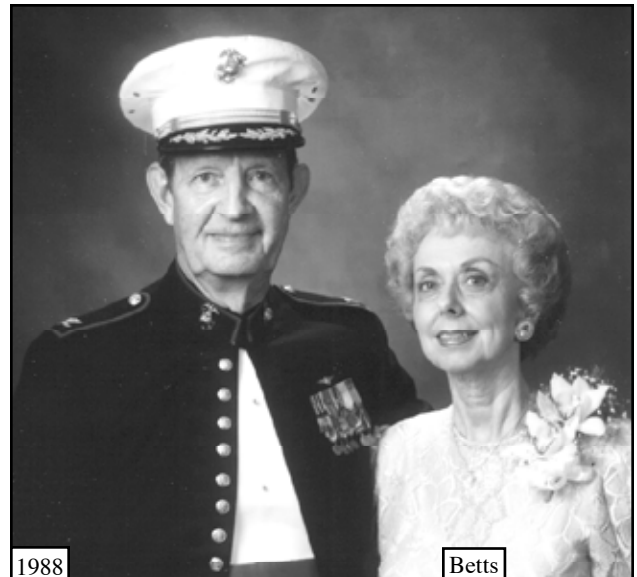
VMFT-10 (Transition Jet Training Squadron), F9F-8 aircraft, El Toro, CA., 02/10/56 - 06/28/57.

MARTD - Reserve Training Detachment w/ 2 FJ-2 squadrons, Columbus, OH., 08/15/58 - 04/12/59.

MARTD - This command had 2 F9F-6 sqds, plus other support sqds., Glenview, IL., 04/25/59 - 07/10/61.

MAG-31 - This command had 2 F8U sqds, 1 A4D sqd. & 4 support sqds. Beaufort, SC. 05/12/63 - 02/09/64.

32nd MEU - This Expeditionary Unit was composed of a reinforced Battalion, 1 A4D squadron & one helicopter squadron (HMM-263), 06/15/64 - 08/21/64
 Operation STEELPIKE - An amphibious landing & 10 day aircraft operating exercise from America on the southern coast of Spain. Short field landing strip, catapult and arresting gear (SATS) were installed



and used by attached squadrons. This short term command included: VMF-451 & VMF-235, both F8U squadrons, and VMA-533, an A4D squadron. 10/16/64 - 11/06/64.

MAG-31 -2nd tour as CO. Composition same as above. Beaufort, SC., 11/15/64 - 04/17/65.

Combat Awards:

3 Distinguished Flying Crosses

Bronze Star with Combat “V”

9 Air Medals

Duty Assignment Chronology

- 12/41-2/42 Flight School (Elimination Phase) St. Louis, MO. Student (JP-1).
- 2/42-5/42 Basic & instrument training, NAS Pensacola, FL. Student (N3N, SNV, SNJ, OS2U).
- 5/42-8/42 Advanced training, NAS Miami, FL. Student. (F3F-1, SNJ).
- 9/42 Ferry Duty, NAS San Diego, CA. (SNJ). All West coast flights.
- 10/42-1/43 VMF-124 training for Far East duty, Camp Kearney, CA. 2nd. LT (SNJ, F4F-4, F4U-1).
- 1/43 Enroute to Guadalcanal (Efate to Guadalcanal) (F4U-1).
- 2/43-9/43 VMF-124 Section Leader. Combat tour. Guadalcanal & Munda (F4U-1).
- 11/43-11/44 VMF-124 Division Leader & Personnel Officer. MCAS Mojave (F4U-1, SNJ, SNB-5). Reformed squadron with same CO and four other original pilots.
- 12/44-4/45 USS *Essex* (CV-9) with Air Group FOUR, 5th Fleet. Capt./Assistant Operations (F4U-1D, F6F).
- 5/45-8/45 Marine Corps Schools, Air-Infantry Course (SBD-6).
- 9/45-4/46 Asst. G-1, Air Bases-East, MCAS Cherry Point, NC. (F4U-1D, SNB). First real staff assignment.

- Continued -

Duty Assignment Chronology continued

5/46-12/46 XO, MAR Training Detachment, NAS Livermore, CA. (FG-1D, SNB, SNJ). Navy & Marine Reserves were being started again after WW II.

1/47-12/48 VMF-115 Operations Officer, MCAS Ewa, HI. (F4U-4, SNJ, R4D-5). VMF-115 just back from China.

1/49-3/51 Gunnery Officer, Training Squadron. 3, NAS Saufley Field, Pensacola. (TO-1, SNJ-5/6).

3/51-4/51 Went through 23.2 hr. jet training course at Milton, FL.

4/51-2/52 XO, VMF-251, MCAS El Toro, CA. (F4U-4).

2/52-12/52 XO, VMF-312, Korea K-6; USS *Bataan* & USS *Baroko*. (F4U-4) MAG-12 S-3 while at K-6.

1/53-6/53 Student, Air University, Maxwell AFB, AL. (SNB, T-11, J-7).

7/53-1/56 Officer Plans, G-1, Hdqtrs., USMC, Washington, DC. (SNB, F7F-3N, AD-1).

2/56-2/58 CO, VMFT-10, MCAS, El Toro, CA. (F9F-5/6, F9F-8, SNB, F4D). Jet transition Sqd.

3/58-7/58 Selection Board & 4 mo. school, Washington, DC. (T-28, SNB).

8/58-4/59 CO, MARTD, NAS Columbus, OH. (FJ-2, SNB, TV-2, HUP-2, R5D-2). Columbus Reserve Operation closed after 8 months.

4/59-7/61 CO, MARTD, NAS Glenview, IL. (F6F-6, TV-2, T-28, SNB, F9F-8T).

8/61-1/62 Student, Armed Forces Staff College, Norfolk, VA. (SNB-5, F9F-8T).

2/62-3/63 G-3, Plans. TF-79 Headquarters, Okinawa. (SNB-5, F9F-8T). Wrote Contingency Plans.

4/63-5/63 Student (Instrument Training), MCAS Cherry Point, NC. (TF9J).

5/63-10/63 CO, MAG-31, MCAS Beaufort, SC. (F8U-D/E, A-4D/E, C-47-J).

2/64-6/64 CO, 32nd MEU, USS *Boxer* (UH-1E).

10/64-11/64 CO, Operation Steel Pike, Almeria, Spain (F8U-D).

11/64-4/65 CO, MAG-31, MCAS Beaufort, SC. (F8U-D/E, A4D-E).

4/65-9/66 Program Manager A-6A & EA6A, BUWEPS, Washington, DC. (U11A, T-28, A6A).

9/30/66 Retired from active duty.

Summary of Significant Career Events

(1) 02/13/43 - First strike on Japanese shipping in Bougainville harbor in the Solomon Islands. Our arrival in Guadalcanal with the new F4U - Corsairs gave ComAirSols his first capability to muster a strike some three hundred miles from Henderson field. The only other fighter with sufficient legs was a few P-38s. This first mission was in two waves. The first consisted of 8 PB4Y-2s; 12 Corsairs & 6 P-38s. The second wave was smaller, consisting of 6 B-24s; 8 Corsairs & 4 P-38s. Our mission was to escort the bombers, to go in at, 20,000 feet with 30 minutes between waves. As might be expected, the 1st wave had no trouble, as the Japanese were completely surprised. However, they managed to get most of

their 120 Zero fighters up and waiting for the second wave. The results were rather disastrous. As I recall, one half of our aircraft by type in the second wave were lost. Although many of the pilots and crews were saved, a few even got back to base but their planes were strikes. For example, 2 of our pilots were shot down over the target area. Much was learned from this experience by all, to include ComAirSols!

(2) 05/13/43 - My most memorable "dogfight". One of the last sizable Japanese strikes on the Guadalcanal/Russell Islands area. Some 120 Japanese fighters and dive bombers were picked up by our radar and coast watchers coming down the "slot" toward Guadalcanal. The alert was fairly early and all of our fighters from several squadrons, including the Australians, scrambled to meet the challenge. Our leading elements, including VMF-124, met their attackers at about the Russells. From then on it was one big ball of action for what seemed like an hour, but probably not over 30 to 40 minutes. There were many aircraft shot down that day on both sides. However, our people came out with superior numbers. In my squadron's area of the battle, Our CO, Major Bill Gise, was killed and several of our other pilots were shot up, including myself. One had to land in the water. I smoked two Zeros that day but was unable to claim them as 7.7 tracers from other Zeros kept coming by the cockpit and "playing tunes" on the armor plate behind my seat which precluded any observance of results. I believe this was the day that Jim Swett shot down his 6 dive bombers. What a day!

(3) 02/17/45 - First Carrier strike against Tokyo area Airfields. I led 8 F4U-1Ds on the first of two strikes this date from the Carrier *Essex* (CV-9). Our target was YOKOTA airfield. We were briefed to go in at 30,000 feet, since we had no real idea of how strong the resistance would be. This indeed was a big day for all of us, being able to finally attack the very heart of the Japanese Empire. The weather was ideal, broken overcast and the best Nav-Aide one could ask for, Mt. FUJI. As we pressed on, it seemed that Mt. Fuji was not getting any closer! At this early time, we had never experienced jet stream effects for two reasons:

- 1 - we rarely operated at 30,000 feet and
- 2 - jet streams were not a problem in the Solomon Islands.

Well, since our ship was some 200 miles off shore we had to convert some of this altitude to speed, which we did and managed to arrive in the target area at 18 to 20,000 feet. It so happened that the enemy air defense capability was worse than we had judged. Our information indicated that most of the 5th Fleet aircraft found and hit their targets that glorious day and I am privileged indeed to have participated. It was reported that the jet stream problem caused several aircraft to land in the water on return to their ships, however, all were allegedly picked up by destroyers or submarines. Another great day!