



**Jerrold M. Zacharias, Captain, USN (Ret.)**  
 “Zack”

Date of Designation: 18 December 1953    NA # T-4035

Dates of Active Duty: July 1946 - February 1978.

Total Flight Hours: 3,642

Carrier/Ship Landings: Fixed wing: 610 (124 night)  
 (129 straight deck)

Approximate Flight Hours:

Jet: 2,808    Prop: 834    VF/VA: 3,046    VT: 596

Combat Tours:

Vietnam: CO, VA-75 “Sunday Punchers” in USS *Kitty Hawk*, (CVA-63), Dec. 67 - Jun. 68. Total of  
 87 A-6 combat missions over North Vietnam.

Aviation Commands:

CO, VA-75 (A-6A, A-6B, KA-6D), June 1967-July 1968  
 CO, VA-42, A-6 RAG(A-6A, TC-4C), June 1970-July 1971  
 CO, USS *Francis Marion* (LPA-249), Aug. 1973-Dec. 1974

Combat Awards:

Navy Cross  
 2 Distinguished Flying Crosses  
 10 Air Medals (2 Individual and 8 Strike/Flight)  
 Presidential Unit Citation (USS *Kitty Hawk*, Yankee Station)

### **Duty Assignment Chronology**

7/46            Enlisted in U.S. Navy.  
 7/46-6/47    Naval Training Center, Bainbridge, MD.  
 6/47-9/47    USS *Wisconsin* (BB-64) - Deck seaman.  
 9/47-6/48    Naval Academy Prep School, Bainbridge, MD.  
 6/48-6/52    U. S. Naval Academy - Midshipman.  
 6/52-9/52    U. S. Naval Academy - Seamanship Instructor.  
 9/52-3/54    Naval Air Training Command - Student.  
                  Basic (SNJ) at Pensacola; Advanced (F6F-5)  
                  at NAS Corpus Christi; Jet Training (F9F-2) at  
                  NAAS Kingsville, TX.



3/54-12/57    VF-72 (later VA-72) - Pilot and Landing  
 Signal Officer (LSO) (F9F-5, A4D-1). NAS  
 Quonset Point, RI., NAS Oceana, VA., and  
 deployment to WestPac in USS *Hornet*  
 (CVA-12).  
 1/58-5/59    ATU-203, Beeville, TX., (F9F-8/F9F-8T)  
 Flight instructor and LSO.  
 6/59-6/61    Navy Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA.  
 BS degree in Aeronautical Engineering (Flight  
 Performance) (T2J-1, AD-5, T28-B, SNB-5).  
 6/61-12/61    VF-174, F-8U RAG and LSO Training.  
 VF-101, F-4A RAG and LSO Training.  
 VA-43, A-4 RAG and LSO Training.  
 12/61-12/63    CVG-8 Staff, LSO/Admin/Safety Officer.  
 (A4D-2N and AD-6). Med deployments in  
 USS *Forrestal* (CVA-59) and A-4 Det , USS  
*Essex* (CVS-9).  
 12/63-6/65    VA-83, A-4E Maintenance and Operations  
 Officer. Med deployments in USS *Forrestal*  
 and *Independence* (CVA-62).  
 6/65-1/66    CVG-8 Staff, Operations Officer. (A-4E)  
 1/66-6/66    Armed Forces Staff College - Student. (TF-9J)  
 6/66-12/66    VA-42, A-6 RAG Training - Student. A-6A  
 Carqual, USS *Lexington*.  
 12/66-7/68    XO/CO, VA-75 (A-6 Intruder) Med deploy-  
 ment in USS *Independence* (CVA-62) and  
 Vietnam deployment in USS *Kitty Hawk*  
 (CVA-63).  
 7/68-6/70    OPTEVFOR - Head, Attack Air Warfare Sect.  
 6/70-7/71    CO, VA-42 (A-6 RAG Training Squadron).  
 8/71-6/72    National War College - Student.  
 6/72-6/73    Special Assistant to the CNO for POW/MIA  
 Matters, (OP-09BW). Navy overall coordina-  
 tor for Operation “Homecoming” for POWs  
 returning from Vietnam.  
 8/73-12/74    CO, USS *Francis Marion* (LPA-249).  
 1/75-2/78    Deputy Director, Aviation Programs (OP-51B)  
 3/1/78        Retired from active duty.  
 3/78-3/92    DCS Corporation, Senior Vice President and  
 Operations Manager.

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## Summary of Significant Career Events

- (1) Was the overall Navy Coordinator for "Operation Homecoming" for Navy POWs returning from Vietnam.
- (2) Flew 22 different aircraft types: N3N, SNJ, F6F-5, F9F-2/5, A4D-1/TA-4, A-4C/E and 2N, TA-4F, F9F-8/8T, C-45/SNB-5, T28-B, A-1/AD-5/6, A-1H, T2J-1, T-33, TF-9J, U-11, F8U-2, F4H-1, A-6A/B/D, EA-6A, and TC4C (Gulfstream modified). Landed aboard or operated from the carriers *Monterey*, *Hornet*, *Lexington*, *Forrestal*, *Essex*, *Intrepid*, *Independence*, *Tarawa*, *Saratoga*, *Yorktown*, *Enterprise*, and *Kitty Hawk*.
- (3) Pilot in the first fleet A-4D squadron (VA-72, at NAS Quonset Point, RI., 1956).
- (4) One of first fleet LSOs to transition from the old "paddles" to the Mirror Landing System and then to the Fresnel Lens system.
- (5) Fired the first anti-SAM Standard Arm missile (AGM-78A) used in combat in Vietnam from an A-6B aircraft on 3/6/68.
- (6) Most Memorable Flight  
Conducted A-6 night strike on the Hanoi Port Facilities in downtown Hanoi on February 24, 1968. Flew from Cubi Point in Philippines to USS *Enterprise* (CVAN-65) on Yankee Station. We launched at 0200 with three other A-6 aircraft. The *Enterprise* A-6 squadron ground crew aligned my A-6's inertial system in the Polar Mode (used only above 65 degrees North or South latitude. We were at 18 degrees North). During catapult shot, my primary attitude reference tumbled and I climbed out on 2" standby gyro. As planned, I headed for tanker to top off fuel for the long flight to Hanoi. Because of system problems, I was last plane in line to tank. Approaching tanker to plug-in, tanker had electrical failure and was unable to transfer fuel. (I'm beginning to think this wasn't going to be my night). Departed tanker and cruised up and down coast of Vietnam with minimum turns to achieve an airborne inertial alignment. Finally got it and headed into mountains west of Hanoi. Departed mountains and descended to 200 feet in Red River Delta. Heard the many Fansong missile radars painting us during descent. When comfortable at 200 feet/450 knots, missile warning receiver sounded and I spotted missiles at 12 and 3 o'clock coming at us. Applied full throttle and descended to 100 feet, to get into radars ground clutter. Even though it was pitch black outside, I noticed objects passing by my left windscreen just as my Bombardier/Navigator calmly says "you are level at 50 feet". Quickly went back to 100 feet and as the missiles approached, I dropped chaff and pulled 5'g, in an 80 degree right bank turn. Missiles exploded nearby buffeting the aircraft violently - but they missed (Later found out they didn't). Resumed run-in to the target. By the time we got there, everybody in

Hanoi was awake and shooting. I dropped 18-500 pound "Snakeye" bombs on the port facilities and egressed right over center of the city at 400 feet while flying in between the many flak sites. Took two more missiles on the way out. With SAM missiles approaching from the rear of the aircraft and not visible to the flight crew, the only way I could tell when it was time to drop chaff and break hard right or left was when the missiles rocket plume started illuminating the cockpit. One missile went flying by and the other hit the ground below us in a brilliant fireball, illuminating the country-side and destroying some poor farmers crops. Had an uneven flight back to ship. Landed at 0430 after 2.4 hour flight with 1,100 pounds of fuel remaining. Ground crew found small hole in left wing four inches from the port wing fuel cell during post-flight inspection. What a great A-6 airplane Grumman Aircraft makes!

- (7) During Vietnam deployment in USS *Kitty Hawk*, completed combat line period of 61 continuous days, a record for the Vietnam war. Our squadron dropped 7.5 million pounds of ordnance during this 61 day line period (a record) and 13.5 millions pounds of ordnance during the seven month deployment (another record). Other combat strikes included the Hanoi Telecommunications Station, Than Hoa railyard, Kein An and Haiphong highway bridges, Haiphong Cat Bi airfield, Hai Duong railroad station, Vinh airfield, Bai Thuong airfield, Thai Binh railyards, Haiphong rail yards (west), Ninh Giang rice mill and lots of other insignificant targets of little worth. Personally dropped 1,144 bombs weighing 349 tons. Our standard loads were 5-2,000 pounders, or 13-1,000 pounders or 22-500 pounders. The A-6 could carry more than that.

During 1967-68 combat deployment, we experienced the worst winter monsoon weather of the Vietnam war. Sometimes, when returning to ship at night in heavy rain, I could not see the Fresnel Lens glideslope "meatball" until after touchdown on deck. These were exciting landings, but the A-6 Intruder was a great instrument aircraft for these conditions and the *Kitty Hawk* carrier controlled approach team were **superb!**

- (8) Was the OPTEVFOR project coordinator for operational testing of: A-6A and A-6C TRIM (Trails, Roads Interdiction Multisensor) aircraft; the ZAP missile; Explosive Light Filter goggles; and A-6 PAVEWAY laser guided bomb. Also, I was the project officer and test director for Operational Evaluation of weapons handling, bomb assembly and aircraft weapons loading equipment in USS *John F. Kennedy* (CVA-67) as part of the Improved Rearming Rate (IRR) project. Conducted OPEVAL in Mediterranean during live ordnance EXPENDEX (for system strikeup and loading evaluation) and during underway replenishment (for system strikedown evaluation).
- (9) Married to the former Rita Jeannine Timmons of Millsboro, DE. Have three sons - Matt, Dana and David and four wonderful grandchildren.