



Stephen Callaghan, CDR, USN (Ret.)
 “Dirt”

Hometowns:

Born in Liverpool, England, in Nov 1956, immigrated to the US a year later with my English/Irish parents, lived in Painesville & Fairport Harbor, Ohio until settling for good in Erie, PA in 1968.

High School and College Career:

Graduated from Cathedral Prep High School in 1975 and attended Mercyhurst College in Erie, PA, graduating in 1979 with degrees in Mathematics and Elementary Education. Distinguished Graduate of Naval War College in 1993.

Dates on Active Duty: October 1979 – November 1999

Date Commissioned/Source: 8 Feb 1980, AOCS.

Date of Designation: 15 May 1981

Total Flight Hours: 3,929

Carrier/Ship Landings: 754

Approximate Flight Hours:

Jets 3850, Prop 80, VF / VFA 3100, VT 820

Combat Tour: VF-103/USS Saratoga/August 1990 – March 1991 Desert Shield/Desert Storm

Combat Missions: 30/ F-14B

Commands:

VFA-82 (FA-18C) Feb 1997 – May 1998



Awards:

- Defense Meritorious Service Medal
- Meritorious Service Medal (2)
- Air Medal (V) (2)
- Strike-Flight Air Medal (2)
- Navy Commendation Medal (3) including one with Combat V)
- East Coast Fighter Pilot of the Year 1992

Duty Assignment Chronology

- 11/79-02/80 AOCS
- 02/80-06/80 VT-6 (T-34C) NAS Whiting Field
- 06/80-05/81 VT23 (T-2C), VT-21 (TA-4J), NAS Kingsville TX
- 05/81-10/82 Flight Instructor VT-21 (TA-4J), Kingsville TX
- 11/82-11/83 VF-101 (F-14A) NAS Oceana, VA
- 12/83-12/86 VF-31 (F-14A) NAS Oceana, VA / USS *John F. Kennedy* / USS *Forrestal*
- 01/87-05/89 TOPGUN (A-4E / F-5E / F-16N) NAS Miramar, CA
- 06/89-10/89 VF-101 (F-14A) NAS Oceana, VA
- 11/89-07/92 VF-103 (F-14A/B) NAS Oceana, VA / USS *Saratoga*
- 08/92-06/93 Naval War College, Newport, RI
- 07/93-05/95 Joint Staff J-3, Washington D.C.
- 06/95-01/96 VFA-106 (FA-18 A/B/C/D) NAS Cecil Field, FL
- 02/96-05/98 VFA-82 (FA-18C) NAS Cecil Field, FL / USS *America* / USS *George Washington*
- 06/98-09/99 Navy Office of Legislative Affairs, Washington D.C.

Summary of Significant Career Events

(1) After completion of flight training at VT-22 in Kingsville, TX, and receiving my Wings of Gold, selected for the SERGRAD program assigned as Advanced Jet flight instructor in TA-4J at VT-21; began LSO training during tour to include the opportunity to wave A-4s aboard the venerable USS *Lexington*.

(2) Reported to VF-101 at NAS Oceana for F-14A CAT-1 training. Selected as Top Stick for the class as well as the opportunity to grab a few extra “must-pump” traps to be ready to go should there be a need for a nugget to head straight to a deployed squadron.

(3) Shockingly enough, traveled to the Med two weeks later to meet VF-31 in Haifa as their newest nugget. Well, not straight to Haifa. Seems it was unclear as to where USS *John F. Kennedy* would be just then, so spent a few days in Sigonella, followed by a trip to Souda Bay. Turns out JFK was not going to have a port call in Souda, so back to Sig for another several days. Then off to Tel Aviv, train to Haifa, ferry to the ship. Met at the brow by new squadronmate LT Mark “Monk” Bathrick, who informed me that I needed to hustle to the bunkroom, drop off my gear and then get into khakis as I had Boat-O in half an hour. Welcome to the fleet. Turned out to be a memorable first deployment, with JFK stationed off the coast of Beirut, a strike on hostile positions (in which I was not invited to participate) and the opportunity to fly a number of TARPS escort missions over hostile ground. Also designated as an Air Wing LSO and LSO Team Leader.

(4) Selected to attend TOPGUN as a student in 1985, followed a year later by orders to return as an instructor just a few months after the release of the movie. Authored a new lecture on F-14 tactics that integrated several lectures covering all aspects of the fighter mission from radar tactics, intercept fundamentals and section/division tactics. Selected as instructor for Fleet Air Superiority Training (FAST), TOPGUN Senior Officer Refresher Training and TOPGUN Staff Standardization Officer. Selected to lead a review of the VF-32 shootdown of Libyan MiG-23s in the Gulf of Sidra for debrief to Commander, Tactical Wings Atlantic.

(5) Department head tour in VF-31 flying the F-14A and then transitioning to the F-14B. Attached to USS *Saratoga*, we deployed a week or so earlier than planned due to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, staying to participate in Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Selected for special mission to train against Mirage F-1s in France during Desert Shield. Led multiple fighter sweep and air wing strikes on targets in Iraq during Desert Storm.

(6) Had the unique opportunity to lead a 34 plane post-Desert Storm fly-in to NAS Oceana. To be fair, that was only because my RIO, Don “Santa” Santapaola was the senior Skipper and I was his pilot for the entire cruise. In any case, it was a rare opportunity and a true honor to lead the air wing into our home field in front of family and friends at the end of a combat deployment.

(7) Selected as the East Coast Fighter Pilot of the Year 1992.

(8) Graduated with Distinction from the Naval War College, earning a Master’s Degree in National Security and Strategic Studies.

(9) Selected as one of the initial group of F-14 pilots to command an FA-18 squadron. After completing the CAT-III syllabus in VFA-106, reported as XO to VFA-82 deployed in the Med aboard USS *America*. Took over command of the Marauders in Feb 1997 and took the squadron on 1997-1998 Med-Arabian Gulf deployment aboard USS *George Washington*. Showed the young kids how to fly the ball, achieving Top Hook status for the deployment. Squadron awarded the 1998 Battle E.

(10) Assigned to Navy Office of Legislative Affairs in the Pentagon as Naval Aviation Liaison to Congress.

Summary of Post Military Work

(1) Retired from US Navy in 1999 and began working for Lockheed Martin Corporation after a short three and a half years with American Airlines. Continued to support Naval Aviation in role as government affairs/liaison on the F-35 program, followed by role as VP for Strategy and Business Development at Sikorsky and then as VP for F-35 Business Development at Lockheed Martin Aeronautics in Ft Worth, TX.

Personal

(1) Currently reside in Warrenton, VA, with Michal, my wife of 42 years (and counting). My daughter Katie is a Speech Pathologist living in Warrenton and her twin sister Megan is a Graphic Designer living in Erie, PA.

Associations/Membership/Boards:

(1) Member of Tailhook Board of Directors 2014-2018.

(2) Member of National Aeronautics Association Board of Directors 2008-2019. Served as Master of Ceremonies for 7 successive Collier Trophy Award Dinners.