

## Rear Admiral Thomas F. Brown III, USN (Ret.)

Thomas F. Brown III, Rear Admiral, USN (Ret), born in Scranton, Pa., graduated from Mt. St. Mary's College, Emmitsburg, MD. in 1954, before entering OCS at Newport, RI Designated a Naval Aviator in July, 1956.

Served in A-4 squadrons VA-153, VA-125 (three tours), VA-164, VA-155 (CAG-15 Ops), and VA-44 before commanding an A-7 squadron, the VA-37 "Bulls", in 1971. Subsequently he commanded Carrier Air Wing 19, USS *Caloosahatchee* (AO-98), USS *Midway* (CV-41), and Carrier Group One. In 1982-84 served as Commander of the Carrier Striking Force, Seventh Fleet and Carrier Group Five. He also commanded the U.S. Military Entrance Processing Command (MEPCOM).

Earned an MA degree in Political Science from U. of Calif., Berkeley in 1963, graduated from National War College in 1974, and earned a Teaching Credential at San Francisco State University in 1987. In May 2000, Mt. St. Mary's College conferred upon him its highest academic honor, the degree of Doctor of Humane Letters. He has accumulated nearly 5000 flight hours, 1017 carrier arrested landings, and during three deployments to Vietnam flew 343 combat missions. His decorations include the Silver Star, Defense Superior Service Medal, five Legions of Merit, four Distinguished Flying Crosses, 36 Air Medals, and the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V".

After retirement from active duty in 1985, RADM Brown became a Math teacher and administrator at the junior high school level in San Francisco.

In addition he has involved himself with the following volunteer activities: 1, Past President of the Saints Peter and Paul Parish Council, 2. The Tailhook Association Board of Directors, Chairman of the Board Emeritus, 3. Chairman of the Commissioning Committees for the USS *Hopper* (DDG 70) and the USS *McCampbell* (DDG 85), 4. Commander General of the Naval Order of the United States, 5. The Board of Directors of the Air Warrior Courage Foundation, 6. The Board of the Bay Area Tailhook Ready Room, 7. Past President of the San Francisco Council of the Navy League of the U.S., and 8. Past President of the A-4 Skyhawk Association.

RADM Brown is a member of The Golden Eagles, the Early and Pioneer Naval Aviators Association. In 1999, he was honored by the presentation of the Tailhook Association Lifetime Achievement Award.

Resides in San Francisco with his wife of 46 years, Marty, who is a former Navy nurse and a practicing Pediatrics Nurse. They have four adult children and seven grandchildren.

## Subjects Covered

5 March 2002

Born and raised in Scranton, Pennsylvania  
Seminary—sheet metal apprentice—finish college at Mt. St. Mary's  
Working for IBM—decision to join the Navy—getting drafted  
Going to OCS—graduated in March 1955

Reckless driving story—important lesson learned  
Decision to enroll in flight training—the pipeline to jets  
Orders to VA-153 at NAS Moffett Field  
Attending Air Intelligence School—Air Force Survival School  
Head injury—Oak Knoll Hospital—Eventual marriage to tending nurse

Receiving the A4D-1 Skyhawk  
Being placed on restricted flying status—Fighting the bureaucracy  
Return back to Cat 1 Flight status—Saw a lot of positive leadership

Discussion of new aircraft and high accident rates  
Loss of skipper CDR Alex Byers followed by ENS Doug Sanford  
Another death during simulated A-bomb drop  
WestPac deployment on *Hancock*  
Decision to augment to the Regular Navy and stay in  
Return to Moffett—loss of LTJG Neil Blake  
Establishment of NAS Lemoore

Orders to Postgraduate School at Berkeley  
Kept current on Skyhawks at NAS Alameda

Assigned to VA-164—deployed on *Oriskany*  
CAG was CDR Jim Stockdale  
Discussion of Vietnam War—Frustration with restrictions

Orders back to VA-125  
Growing family with four kids—challenges of raising a family  
Duties as VA-125 QA officer—OinC opportunities

Orders to CVW-15 as the Ops Officer  
Deployed on *Coral Sea*  
Solid tactics—F-4 losses to SAMs  
*Pueblo* incident—stationed off Korea

Promotion to Commander—Orders to NAS Cecil Field  
Maintenance Officer at VA-44 and orders to Armed Forces Staff College  
Turned down opportunity to transition to A-6 Intruders  
Transitioned to A-7s—Assigned as XO/CO of VA-37  
Deployed on *Saratoga*—The CV concept  
ADM Holloway as CARDIV commander followed by VADM Baldwin

Screened for Air Wing Commander  
Assignment as CAG-19 on *Oriskany*  
Got qualed on the F-8 Crusader—Vietnam deployment  
Bringing back the POWs  
Assignment to National War College—recharged  
Orders a Aviation Commander Detailer  
Picked up O-6—orders to *Caloosahatchee*

One tenth of crew UA when arrived—difficult command climate  
Collision at sea during unrep—Survived the investigation  
Screened for carrier command—attended school in Idaho and OPNAV 50W  
Requested orders to *Midway*

Homeporting in Japan overview—relations with Japanese  
SRF Yokosuka—Kept carrier in top form  
Discussion of *Midway* limitations  
Earned awards and high retention and readiness

Recap of Naval Aviation milestones circa 1960:  
Level-readiness concept—slowly feed replacements to squadrons  
Introduction of NATOPS  
Screening process for XO/COs and “fleeing up”

Flag officer oversight while on *Midway*  
*Ranger* collision—Responding and deploying to Arabian Sea  
F-4 recovery incident

Selection for Rear Admiral—Orders to Military Entrance Processing Command  
On to ComCarGru One under Third Fleet VADM Ed Waller  
Battle Group Integrity Concept

Battle Group Charlie with *Coral Sea*  
Deployment to IO and Arabian Sea in 1981

Seventh Fleet Battle Force Commander  
Based out of Subic Bay—Embarked on *Midway*  
The Two Can Beer rule—Operating in the IO

Pentagon Tour as Director of Strike and Amphibious Warfare  
Retirement and move to San Francisco

Additional comments on *Midway* visit program  
Working with Commander Naval Forces Japan—liaison with the Japanese  
CDR Jim Auer—CO of *Francis Hammond*—Spoke Japanese—Diss. on JMSDF  
Ichiro Masuoka—“Mr. Navy”—had flown out to *Midway*  
Go to man—SecDef visit  
Molestation case—Community Briefings  
Japanese sensitivities—Sincerity is important  
Cultivating—Learning the culture

Family support—Wife’s desire he leave the service  
Change of heart—follow-on tours got better

Leadership—Keeping in touch with the troops  
Flying as a senior officer  
Span of control—Admiral puts you further out of touch  
The delicate balance between CO and embarked Flag  
Interviewing COs on CPA policies as an example

Rundown of Admirals he worked for in Japan

24 March 2002

Discussion of aircraft  
13 years flying A-4 Skyhawks—Designed to carry nukes—High landing gear  
Problems with having only one engine—encouraged high standards for maintenance  
Survivability in combat—Hydraulic Boost Disconnect System  
Spoilers added to counter crosswinds on ground  
Nomenclature  
Decision to buy the A-7—A mistake?  
Discusses aircraft pro and cons—Ordnance carrying capacity

Discussion on Leadership  
Character—is crucial—moral values—role models

Changes in societal values—the media  
Trust, integrity, truthfulness=character

Becoming a leader—learning from positive and negative examples  
Examples—family—Ted Williams—CPOs—XOs, COs  
Getting experience in high school—college  
Opportunities in Naval Aviation  
Importance of Communication

Discussion of 14 attributes/factors of leadership:  
Caring—Beware of too much personal ambition—Need to be fair and consistent  
Communications—Positive Attitude/Feedback (Palma case study)  
Lead by example—Take care of your people (Chaplain case study)  
Trust your gut feelings—Delegating Authority—Show passion for the profession  
Strive to do what's right as well as best as you can  
Leadership by ability versus leadership by terror  
Loyalty versus Truth (USNA case study)  
Decision Making (*Midway* case study)

Examples of role models:  
Bobby McCann—Joe Demski—parents  
CDR Dutch Netherland—CDR Jack Shaw—Both killed over Vietnam  
Capt John Barrow on *Oriskany*