

DECOMMISSIONING CEREMONY
UNITED STATES SHIP ORISKANY



Thursday
30 September 1976
Naval Air Station
Alameda, California

THE COMMISSION PENNANT

The origin of the Commission Pennant is said to date back to the seventeenth century, when the Dutch were fighting the English. Admiral TROMP hoisted a broom at his masthead to indicate his intention to sweep the English from the sea. The gesture was soon answered by the English Admiral who hoisted a horsewhip, to indicate his intention to chastise the Dutch. The British carried out their boast and ever since, the narrow or coach-whip pennant (symbolizing the original horsewhip) has been the distinctive mark of a ship of war and has been adopted by all nations.

The modern U.S. Navy Commission Pennant is blue at the hoist with a union of seven white stars and a horizontal red and white stripe at the fly.

When a ship first enters the active service, the Commission Pennant is broken, indicating that the Captain is henceforth responsible for the ship's readiness and her safe, efficient operation. When the ship is decommissioned, this status is removed, the Captain relieved of his responsibility, and the ship's service is terminated.

UNITED STATES SHIP
ORISKANY
ATTACK AIRCRAFT CARRIER
THIRTY-FOUR

BUILT BY
NEW YORK NAVAL SHIPYARD
BROOKLYN, NEW YORK

INACTIVATED AT NAVAL AIR STATION
ALAMEDA, CALIFORNIA

<i>Authorized</i>	<i>7 Aug 1942</i>
<i>Keel Laid</i>	<i>1 May 1944</i>
<i>Launched</i>	<i>13 Oct 1945</i>
<i>Construction Suspended</i>	<i>29 Aug 1946</i>
<i>Construction Resumed</i>	<i>11 Aug 1947</i>
<i>Commissioned</i>	<i>25 Sep 1950</i>
<i>Decommissioned (San Francisco Bay Naval Shipyard)</i>	<i>2 Jan 1957</i>
<i>Recommissioned</i>	<i>7 Mar 1959</i>
<i>Decommissioned</i>	<i>30 Sep 1976</i>

ORISKANY'S

On July 17, 1777, General Nicholas Herkimer issued a call to Americans living near Rome, New York, asking them "to march to oppose the enemy with vigor, as true patriots, for the defense of their country." The call was answered, and on August 6, 1777, the strategic Battle of Oriskany was fought, which helped turn the tide of the Revolutionary War. One-hundred and sixty-four years later on August 7, 1942, Congress authorized the construction of the attack aircraft carrier USS ORISKANY (CV-34).

ORISKANY was the last Essex class attack carrier. With the completion of her sixteenth and final cruise she leaves to history the final story of perhaps the greatest class of ships ever to go to sea and fight.

The last of twenty-four sisters with names like YORKTOWN, HORNET and FRANKLIN, she was conceived in the fury of war. Named after the Revolutionary War battle of Oriskany Creek, her keel was laid at the New York Navy Yard in Brooklyn on May 1, 1944 and was launched on October 13, 1945 after the close of WWII. Her construction was suspended on August 29, 1946 and she waited while carrier aviation grew even more powerful and required carriers to operate faster and heavier aircraft.

Construction was resumed on August 11, 1947 under a project called "27A." The project included many modifications to the original design. ORISKANY's armor belt was removed and her hull widened by the addition of blisters on each side. This increased her displacement from 27,100 tons standard (33,900 trial) to 39,000 tons full load. More powerful hydraulic (H-8) catapults and arresting gear were installed.

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The flight deck and elevators were significantly strengthened. The island structure was shortened, modernized and an escalator added. Four more five-inch guns were installed in sponsons on the starboard side. Finally commissioned on September 25, 1950, ORISKANY was the last Essex class carrier to be placed in service and was capable of operating aircraft weighing upwards of 50,000 pounds.

With Captain Percy H. Lyons in command, ORISKANY steamed to Guantanamo Bay for her shakedown cruise. Oriskanymen got the ship off to an impressive beginning by setting an all-time record in gunnery marksmanship. ORISKANY returned to her home port of Quonset Point, Rhode Island, before deploying on a five month Mediterranean cruise in May 1951.

Upon completion of the cruise, ORISKANY entered the Brooklyn Naval Shipyard in November 1951, and was placed in inactive status for flight deck renovation. On her recommissioning in May 1952, ORISKANY returned to active duty with a new bridge, flight deck and automatic steering system.

ORISKANY became the first aircraft carrier to round Cape Horn while enroute to San Diego, California, the ship's new home port. During the rest of 1952 and 1953, ORISKANY served with the U.S. SEVENTH Fleet as a part of the United Nations Task Force in the Korean conflict.

In 1956 ORISKANY was deactivated and an extensive angle deck conversion and modernization was completed. She was decommissioned on January 2, 1957. During the next two years the "Mighty O" was sculptured into a

ORISKANY'S

striking new shape, complete with an angled flight deck and streamlined hurricane bow. The old hydraulic catapults were replaced by steam-driven ones capable of launching much heavier aircraft. The cramped Combat Information Center was relocated to a more protected area of the ship and the crew's berthing spaces were modernized. ORISKANY was recommissioned on March 7, 1959, and Captain James M. Wright, who served as Executive Officer in 1951 and 1952, assumed command.

ORISKANY has had a distinguished career during her commissioned service. Among the many highlights which have been attributed to ORISKANY are:

- 1952-1953 Korean deployment - ORISKANY planes dropped 4,600 tons of bombs and expended more than 1,000,000 rounds of 20MM ammunition during 7001 sorties over 111 flying days. During this cruise F-9F Panther jets engaged in what is believed to be the first multi-jet aerial dog-fight in naval history. Four ORISKANY jets were pitted against seven Communist MIG 15's and emerged victorious. Two MIG's were destroyed and a third was damaged. All four ORISKANY pilots returned safely.

- ORISKANY has been the scene of two major movies. The Bridges of Toko-Ri and the Men of the Fighting Lady.

- In June 1963, President John F. Kennedy visited ORISKANY to witness an operational readiness demonstration and observe the Naval Tactical Data System (NTDS). NTDS is an electronic computer system that collects, stores, sorts and evaluates tactical data from the ship's radar and communications system in

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electronic computers. ORISKANY was the first ship to employ this sophisticated system, which is still the most modern and capable of anti-air warfare control systems.

- ORISKANY has won the Ney Award for the best enlisted mess in 1964, 1965 and 1973.

- In 1963-1964, then Commander Robert Baldwin was the Commander of Carrier Air Group (CAG) 16 on board. In 1975-1976, ORISKANY was under the direction of Vice Admiral Baldwin in his job as Commander Naval Air Forces, U.S. Pacific Fleet.

- In 1965 pilots of CAG 16 flew their first combat sorties of the Vietnam conflict. Exceptional demands were made on the ship and her crew, but the veteran carrier never missed a single day's combat commitment. The CAG on board was then Commander Stockdale. On September 9, 1965, Commander Stockdale did not return from a combat mission over North Vietnam. He was listed as missing in action, and, in fact, became the Navy's senior Prisoner of War during the Vietnam conflict, spending over seven years in North Vietnamese prisons. He was subsequently awarded the Medal of Honor for his leadership and actions as a POW.

During the cruise ORISKANY flew over 12,000 combat sorties, the largest number ever achieved by any carrier in naval history during a single combat deployment. Her planes dropped 10,000 tons of bombs and for these efforts the ship and Air Wing were awarded the Navy Unit Commendation.

- On September 16, 1966, ORISKANY rescued forty-four crewmen of a British freighter grounded on Pratas

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Reef using the ship's helicopter detachment. One helo was lost when a huge wave literally knocked it out of the air, but all helo crewmen were rescued.

- Captain John H. Tarrobino assumed command of ORISKANY in March 1966, adding another chapter to naval history. His brother Charles commanded the ship in 1962 and 1963. It was the first time that two brothers had commanded the same aircraft carrier.

- The 1967 WESTPAC cruise saw ORISKANY pilots participate in air raids of the Vietnam War against such key targets as Haiphong's Lach Tray Shipyard, the Cam Pha port facilities and the Phuc Yen MIG base north of Hanoi. ORISKANY jets also were the first to drop a major bridge in the center of Haiphong, the Haiphong Highway Bridge (SSE), a three-span concrete and steel structure.

- One of ORISKANY's F-8 interceptors, piloted by Lieutenant Dick Wyman made headlines by downing an enemy MIG 17 in a furious dog-fight that took place over seventy miles of North Vietnam. The fifteen minute chase, termed one of the longest aerial engagements in the history of the Vietnam War by many pilots, ended when Lieutenant Wyman fired an air-to-air missile that sent the MIG cartwheeling into a rice paddy where it exploded and burned.

- Another ORISKANY F-8 Crusader pilot Lieutenant Commander Verich was shot down on a mission over North Vietnam by an enemy missile. Verich successfully evaded capture for the remainder of the day and night before being plucked from the enemy's own backyard the next morning in a daring rescue led by fellow

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ORISKANY pilots.

- ORISKANY has suffered two major fires. On March 6, 1953, the "Mighty O" fought her first battle with a major fire. An F-4U Corsair returned from a mission in Korea with a hung bomb, and attempted to land. The bomb dislodged, exploded and the ensuing flames, fed by gasoline from the Corsair, spread to the hangar bay.

Two men were killed and fifteen injured, but the flames were isolated in the hangar bay and extinguished. The hero of the day, however, was Airman Richard Donovan who plunged through the flames and exploding ammunition to cut the parachute harness which had trapped the pilot in his burning plane. Donovan and another airman then carried the flier to safety. Night repair efforts enabled the ship to resume flying strikes the next morning.

Perhaps the grimest day in ORISKANY history was October 26, 1966. A fire started in a parachute flare locker in hangar bay one and forty-four men died. It burned through four decks and the officers berthing areas forward of the number One elevator. Many of the dead were pilots who had only hours before returned from combat missions over North Vietnam. When the fires were extinguished the damage became visible. Two helicopters were destroyed, four "Skyhawks" badly damaged, hangar bay One gutted, (incapacitating the catapults), and officers' country burned out.

ORISKANY began her last cruise on September 16, 1975. It was her sixteenth deployment, the fifteenth to WESTPAC. Significantly, she celebrated her silver anniversary during the second week of the cruise, mark-

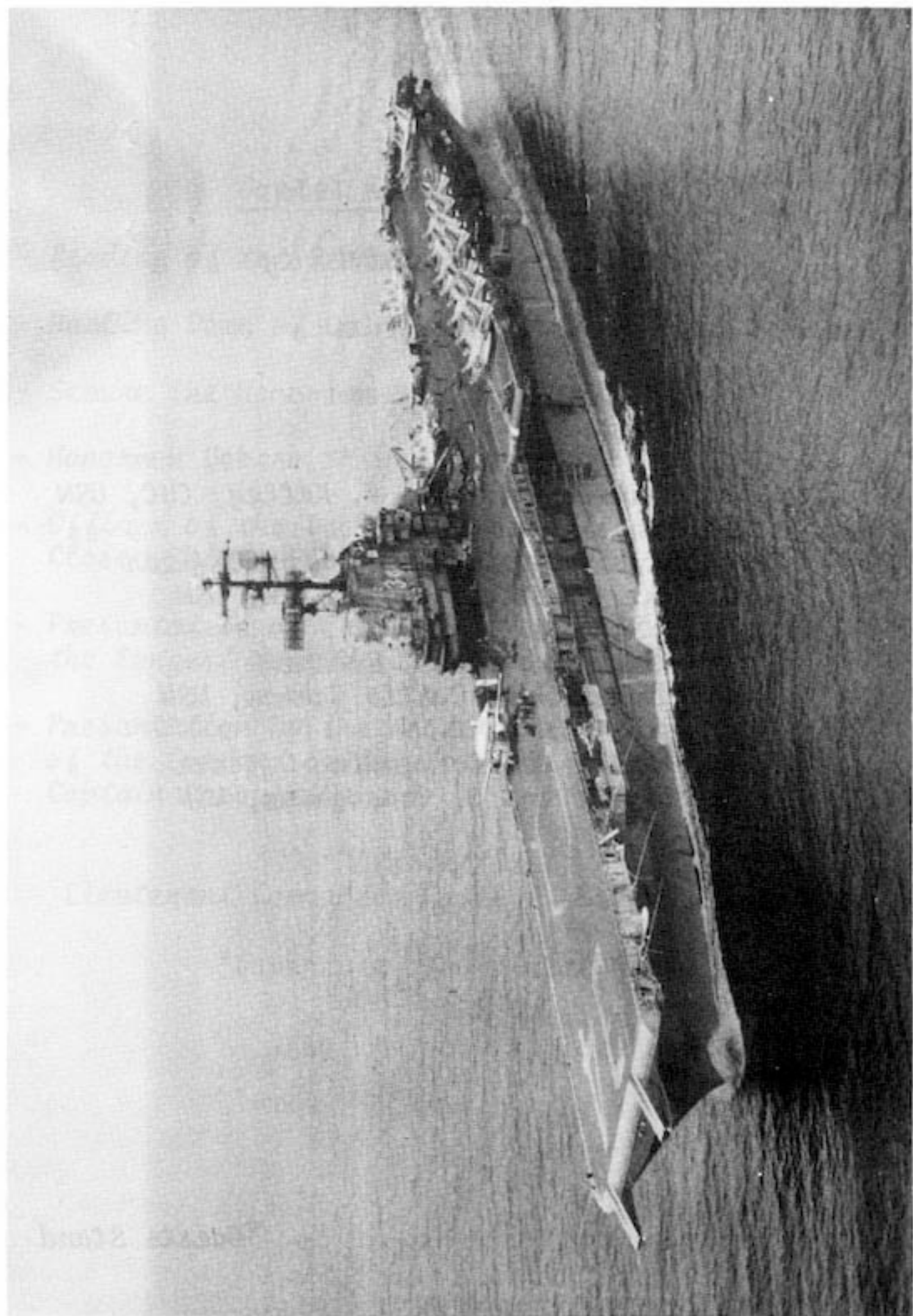
ORISKANY'S STORY

ing twenty-five years of service. She also recorded her 202,000th arrested landing during the deployment.

The last cruise of an Essex class carrier ended on March 3, 1976 with the ORISKANY's arrival in Alameda. She was born in the fury of war in 1944 and retired in peace in 1976.

ORISKANY'S DECORATIONS

Navy Unit Commendation Medal w/two battle stars
Navy Occupation Service Medal (European Class)
China Service Medal
United Nations Service Medal
Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal w/one battle star
National Defense Service Medal w/two battle stars
Meritorious Unit Commendation
Korean Presidential Unit Citation Badge
Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal
Korean Service Medal
Vietnam Service Medal w/four battle stars
Republic of Vietnam Meritorious Unit Citation
Gallantry Cross
Korean Defense w/one battle star
Third Korean Winter w/one battle star
Vietnam Advisory Campaign w/one battle star
Vietnamese Defense Campaign w/one battle star
Vietnamese Counter-Offensive Campaign w/one battle star
Vietnamese Counter-Offensive Campaign - Phase II
w/one battle star
Vietnam Operations w/one battle star



PROGRAM

1000, 30 September 1976

*Arrival of Official Party

*Parade the Colors

*National Anthem

*Invocation

Lieutenant Commander James F. Kelley, CHC, USN

Introduction by the Commanding Officer
Captain Robert G. Conaughton, USN

Remarks by Guest Speaker
Rear Admiral John Curtis Barrow, USN

Remarks by the Commanding Officer
Captain Robert G. Conaughton, USN

*Guests Stand

PROGRAM

Decommissioning Ceremony

- Reading of the Decommissioning Orders
- Hauling Down of Colors and Commissioning Pennant
- Secure the Honormen and the Watch
- Honormen Debark Ship
- Officer of the Deck Presents National Ensign and Closed Ship's Log to the Commanding Officer
- Presentation of last flown National Ensign to the longest toured sailor presently onboard
- Presentation by the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Command of the Commissioning Pennant to Captain Conaughton

*Benediction

Lieutenant Commander James F. Kelley, CHC, USN

*Departure of Official Party



CAPTAIN ROBERT G. CONAUGHTON, USN

BIOGRAPHY

Captain Conaughton enlisted in the Naval Air Reserve at the Naval Air Station, Miami in June 1949. The following year he received an appointment to the Naval Academy and was commissioned an Ensign in June 1954. He was ordered to flight training at Pensacola, Florida and was designated a Naval Aviator in December 1955, at Beeville, Texas.

His first squadron tour was with Fighter Squadron 142 based at Naval Air Station, Miramar, California. He flew FJ-3's and F-8's and deployed on USS HORNET and USS RANGER. He then served a short tour as an F-8 instructor with VF-124 at Naval Air Station, Moffett Field. In August, 1960, he entered the Naval Post Graduate School at Monterey, California, in the weapons systems curriculum.

He was then ordered to VFP (photo reconnaissance squadron) 62 where he served as Administrative Officer and Officer in Charge of Detachment 65 onboard USS ENTERPRISE. In October, 1965, Captain Conaughton reported to the Staff of Commander SEVENTH Fleet onboard USS PROVIDENCE (CLG-6).

After two years on the staff he became the Assistant Projects Officer for Air Development Squadron Five at Chin Lake, California. In February, 1969, Captain Conaughton reported to VF-162 as the Executive Officer, and in October became the Commanding Officer. VF-162 deployed to Vietnam on USS TICONDEROGA and USS SHANGRI-LA. Duty at the Naval Air Systems Command Headquarters followed as class desk officer for the F-8 aircraft.

Captain Conaughton attended the Industrial College of the Armed Forces in 1973-74 and earned a Masters Degree in Administration from George Washington University. He reported to ORISKANY as Executive Officer on November 1, 1974. On June 23, 1976, he became her Commanding Officer.

Captain Conaughton is married to the former Alice M. Cooper of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. They have two sons and two daughters.



REAR ADMIRAL JOHN CURTIS BARROW, USN

RADM John C. Barrow was born in New Bloomfield, Missouri, the son of the late Mr. and Mrs. G. E. Barrow. He enlisted in the Navy V-5 (Aviation Cadet) Program in June 1943 and in June 1945, he entered the Naval Academy and was graduated and commissioned in 1949. RADM Barrow was designated a Naval Aviator in April 1951 and served with VF-21 at NAS, Oceana, Virginia from August 1951 to August 1955. On 1 April 1954, he was one of three members of VF-21 who spanned the continent non-stop from San Diego to New York in less than four hours (a trans-

continental speed record at that time) while flying the F9F-6, Cougar, and utilizing in-flight refueling then in its infancy.

From August 1955 until June 1958, RADM Barrow was on the faculty at the U.S. Naval Academy. He then served with VFP-62 until August 1961 where he was Officer-in-Charge of a Photo Detachment. Attendance at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy followed and he received a Master of Arts degree in 1962 and the degree of Master of Arts in Law and Diplomacy in 1963.

RADM Barrow reported to VF-32 in January 1964 serving as Executive Officer until December 1965 and then as Commanding Officer until December 1966.

Taking command of Attack Carrier Air Wing 3 in July 1967, he was relieved in November 1968 and reported for duty in OPNAV with the Strategic Plans and Policy Division. From November 1969 until January 1971, he was Executive Assistant and Senior Aide to the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Plans and Policy.

RADM Barrow commanded USS OGDEN (LPD-5) from April 1971 to January 1972. He commanded USS ORISKANY (CV-34) from March 1972 until October 1973, during which time the ship made a ten month combat deployment to WESTPAC and was on station in the Gulf of Tonkin when hostilities ceased.

In November 1973, RADM Barrow was assigned to the Politico-Military Policy Division in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations as the Deputy Director and after 1 May 1975 as the Division Director. He was also CNO's Special Assistant for Pan-American Affairs. RADM Barrow was promoted to his present grade on 1 July 1975.

He is authorized to wear the Legion of Merit with gold star, Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal, Navy Commendation Medal w/Combat "V", the Meritorious Unit Commendation, and the Navy Expeditionary Medal.

RADM Barrow is married to the former Marilyn Anne Cookman of Elizabeth, New Jersey. They now reside at 8720 Eugene Place, Alexandria, Virginia.

COMMANDING OFFICERS

Percy H. Lyons	Sep 50 - Jul 51
John D. Lambrecht	Jul 51 - Jul 52
Courtney Shands	Jul 52 - Jun 53
Charles D. Griffin	Jun 53 - Jul 54
Leroy C. Simpler	Jul 54 - Jul 55
Charles L. Westhofen	Jul 55 - Jan 57
James M. Wright	Mar 59 - Feb 60
William S. Guest	Feb 60 - Mar 61
Harry H. Barton	Mar 61 - Mar 62
Charles A. Iarrobino	Mar 62 - Mar 63
Herman J. Trum	Mar 63 - Mar 64
William H. House	Mar 64 - Mar 65
Bartholomew J. Connolly III	Mar 65 - Mar 66
John H. Iarrobino	Mar 66 - Mar 67
Billy D. Holder	Mar 67 - Mar 68
Jack S. Kenyon	Mar 68 - Sep 69
John A. Gillcrist	Sep 69 - Sep 70
Frank S. Haak	Sep 70 - Mar 72
John C. Barrow	Mar 72 - Oct 73
Forrest P. Anderson	Oct 73 - Jan 75
Huntington Hardisty	Jan 75 - Jun 76
Robert G. Conaughton	Jun 76 - Sep 76

SHIP'S STATISTICS

LAUNCHED	October 13, 1945
COMMISSIONED	September 25, 1950
LENGTH	911 feet
HEIGHT	225 feet
BREADTH	197 feet
DRAFT	33 feet, 9 inches
DISPLACEMENT	44,500 tons
SPEED	Over 30 knots
HORSEPOWER	150,000
PROPULSION	4 engines 4 screws 1 rudder
FRESH WATER MADE	180,000 gallons per day
SHIP'S COMPANY	109 officers 1981 enlisted
AIR WING	135 officers 1050 enlisted
ANCHORS	15 tons
ANCHOR CHAIN	215 fathoms (port) 155 fathoms (starboard)
ARRESTED LANDINGS	202,788

