

BIOGRAPHY

Bradley E. Smith Commander, USN (Ret)

Brad Started flying lessons at the age of fifteen (15) and obtained his Private Pilot's license prior to enlisting in the Navy in 1961. He was later selected for Naval Aviation Cadet flight training and received his Naval Aviator wings and officer's commission in 1964.

After further weapons and aircraft carrier training, he was assigned to Jet Attack Squadron V A- 76 and immediately went to sea on aircraft carriers Roosevelt, America, and Enterprise.

In Oct 1965 he departed for Southeast Asia on the USS Enterprise, arriving off South Vietnam in late Nov 1965. On the 25th of March 1966 while on his 80th mission, Brad was shot down over North Vietnam in the vicinity of the city of Vinh. He was held prisoner of war from that date until his release on the 12th of February 1973.

After his repatriation and flight refresher training, Brad was one of the small numbers of Navy pilots returning to Fleet Combat squadrons. From 1974 through 1981, he served three A- 7 Squadron tours on Aircraft carriers. From 1974-1977, he served on the USS Saratoga seeing duty off the coast of Lebanon; and from 1979 -1981, on the USS Coral Sea in the Indian Ocean during the ill-fated attempt to rescue the Iran hostages.

From 1981-1985, Brad served as the Aircraft Maintenance Officer and as a Weapons System Test Pilot at the Pacific Missile Test Center, Pt. Mugu, California. Flight test-projects included live firing tests of the Tomahawk-&-Harpoon cruise missiles, the Advanced Walleye, Phoenix laser guided weapons and development Airborne laser systems. Brad has been qualified as a test pilot, instructor pilot, instrument check, and proficiency check pilot in single and multi-engine jet & propeller Aircraft.

His personnel Decorations include 2 Silver Stars, the Legion of Merit; 2 Distinguished Flying Crosses; the Meritorious Service Medal; 3

Bronze Stars; 2 Purple Hearts; 5 Air Medals; and the Navy Commendation Medal.

After retirement from the Navy in 1985. Brad was employed by Lear Siegler, Inc., a defense contractor in the aerospace field and attained senior management level positions.

After leaving Lear Siegler in 1991, Brad relocated with his wife Kirsten to Bradenton Florida. He started a Stained- Glass business and turned a passionate hobby in to a business. He retired from the stained- glass- business in 2005.

Brad is a graduate of the University of North Florida with a degree in business.

Brad is still flying and building his own airplanes. He recently built an RV-6 and is flying his open cockpit bi-wing Tiger Moth which he also built and is very active in several aviation activities and veteran's organizations.

Brad and his wife Kirsten are celebrated their 50th anniversary this Year.

They spend a lot of time with their daughter and their 4 Grandchildren, and other family members, who all live close by.