



## MARITIME PATROL AND RECONNAISSANCE FORCE HALL OF HONOR

### Captain Don East

United States Navy

CAPT Don East was born in Alabama and enlisted in the Navy upon graduating high school in 1957. After graduating from Cryptologic Technician School, he served operationally at Naval Security Groups in Turkey and Germany and flew numerous cryptology support missions with VQ-2. During his next tour as an instructor at the Cryptologic Training School, he was selected for Officer and Naval Flight Officer training and, upon graduating with the highest average, was ordered to be an instructor in the New Airborne ELINT course at NAS Glynco.

He subsequently joined VQ-2 in Rota, Spain where he qualified as an ELINT Analysis Officer and Senior Evaluator in both the EA-3B Skywarrior and EC-121M Warning Star. He then served as an Electronic Warfare Specialist at the USAF Security Services Headquarters, prior to selection for Naval Postgraduate School, where he earned both Bachelors and Masters Degrees. After serving as the Operations Officer for the newly formed Patrol Squadron Special Projects Unit ONE at NAS Brunswick, Maine, he was selected as the Unit's Officer-In-Charge from 1977 to 1979. Returning to VQ-2, he commanded the squadron during the evacuation of the Multi-National Peacekeeping Force in Lebanon after the terrorist bombing that took the lives of 241 American and 58 French Peacekeepers. During this time the squadron also earned its first "Battle E" award.

During his tour as the Chair of Electronic Warfare at the Naval War College, the Secretary of Navy asked him to write an unclassified history of VQ-1 and VQ-2 for use in his Congressional testimony on the importance of replacing the aging EA-3B. The result of his effort was the building of the ES-3A Shadow aircraft and the establishment of two new carrier-based electronic reconnaissance squadrons, VQ-5 and VQ-6.

During his final two tours at the Naval Technical Intelligence Center in Suitland, Maryland and as Senior Naval Advisor for Naval Operations and Soviet Studies, he participated in numerous trips to the Soviet Union as a member of the USA/USSR Incidents at Sea Negotiating Team and with the multi-national military team in Moscow, providing guidance to the Soviet and new Russian military on the transition from communism to democracy. It was on one of these trips that he was in the Kremlin to witness the final lowering of the USSR's hammer and sickle flag and the raising of the Russian tricolors.