



## MARITIME PATROL AND RECONNAISSANCE FORCE HALL OF HONOR

### Rear Admiral Gerald MacKay

United States Navy

Rear Admiral MacKay was born in Canada but grew up in Boston. A child of World War II, he enlisted in the naval reserve submarine service immediately after high school. His talent and abilities were quickly recognized and he was selected for the new Naval Aviation Cadet Program and was commissioned an Ensign upon earning his wings of gold at Hutchinson, Kansas at the age of 20.

During his long flying career, he accumulated over 4500 hours in P-2V Neptune and P-3 A, B and C Orion aircraft. His first tour saw him flying P-2s with VP-16, deploying to Iceland and Africa during the early Cold War years. During his next tour as a Research and Development Project Officer with Naval Air Development Command, he was also the Navy's aircraft acceptance test pilot for Grumman Aircraft. He subsequently served aboard the aircraft carrier USS Lake Champlain, earning Officer of the Deck Underway qualification.

After a tour with VP-31 as the Operations and Training Officer, he reported to the Blue Sharks of VP-6 for his first command tour and, as Commanding Officer, led the final P-3 deployment in support of combat operations in Vietnam. He subsequently commanded VP-31 and Patrol Wing ONE. Selected for flag rank, his initial assignment was Commander, Patrol Wings Pacific where he was instrumental in the introduction of the Harpoon Anti-Surface Missile to the community. His sixth and final command tour was as Commander, US Naval Forces Japan. While there, he coordinated the efforts of over 60 US and allied aircraft and 40 warships in the rescue of over 20,000 Vietnamese refugees from sea, an achievement he considered the greatest accomplishment of his 32 year career. He also deftly coordinated the US response to the Soviet Union downing of Korean Air Lines Flight 007 during the height of the Cold War. His final tour was as Deputy Comptroller of the Navy.

Throughout his career, RADM MacKay was considered a sailor's sailor and of him, ADM Harry Harris (then Commander, US Pacific Command said), "He taught me that integrity, accountability and reputation were worth more than promotions, medals and treasure – in fact, they counted for everything". RADM MacKay passed away 10 August 2017 with his wife of 49 years, Linda by his side.