



## MARITIME PATROL AND RECONNAISSANCE FORCE HALL OF HONOR

### Master Chief (AM) John Rosa United States Navy

Master Chief Rosa was born in Massachusetts in 1922 and enlisted in the Navy on January 20, 1941. His initial tour was with VP-42 flying as a flight engineer in PB-1 and subsequently PB-5 aircraft. In February 1943, at Ault Field in Whidbey Island, Washington, the squadron was re-designated Patrol and Bombing Squadron ONE THIRTY FIVE and adopted the nickname the "Blind Foxes". VPB-135 eventually became what we know today as VP-5, making Master Chief Rosa the oldest surviving plank-owner of the current day "Mad Foxes". Their nickname grew out of their standard attack method of transiting through thick cloud cover, diving in to conduct attacks and subsequently climbing up into the cloud cover to escape ground fire and enemy fighter planes. Operating from the Aleutian Island of Amchitka, Master Chief Rosa's crew flew 37 combat missions under constant enemy fire in the campaign to interdict supplies to the Japanese forces occupying the Aleutian Islands.

In 1944, the squadron shifted to Attu Island, conducting photo-reconnaissance missions against the Japanese Kurile Islands. On his crew's fifth mission, their aircraft received extensive damage from ground fire and was subsequently forced to land in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, Russia. The crew of 6 personnel were met by Russian Military and subsequently processed and placed in detainment (prison) camps in Siberia. As with numerous other US servicemen detained by the Russians, including some of Doolittle's Raiders, Master Chief Rosa was thought to have been lost at sea, missing in action or killed in action. He spend the next 6 months as a detainee and it was not until 1984, upon declassification of state department documents, that his detainment was officially recognized and not until 1990, that his time in Russia would allow him to be officially classified as a prisoner of war, with entitlement to the back pay, combat disability rating and more.

Post WWII, Master Chief Rosa served on both coasts during the Korean War and Vietnam Conflict in a variety of capacities to include several afloat staffs, Ships Company and instructor duty. While on carriers USS BOXER (CV-21) and USS TARAWA (CV-40), he primarily served as a maintenance supervisor and deck handler, while maintaining his flight qualification in various types and models of carrier aviation propeller aircraft.

His final duties ashore included instructor duty at NAS Jacksonville and service as the first Command Master Chief of NAS Cecil Field. He retired from the Navy in 1972 and went on to earn his bachelor's degree in Business. In January 2016, he and his wife celebrated their 70<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary and in March of 2016 he celebrated his 94<sup>th</sup> birthday.