



## MARITIME PATROL AND RECONNAISSANCE FORCE HALL OF HONOR

### Captain Vince Anania

United States Navy

Captain Anania was born April 22, 1920 in Marianna, Penn., the first in his family to be born in the United States. He enrolled in the United States Naval Academy with the class of 1945, which graduated one year early in 1944. His wartime assignment was on the USS Quincy, where he served as a member of the crew transporting President Roosevelt to the Yalta Conference to meet Josef Stalin of the Soviet Union. At the end of WWII, Captain Anania was assigned to flight training and subsequently posted to the Western Pacific where he was awarded a Bronze Star for his service in the Korean Conflict. Following the conflict, CAPT Anania was assigned duty in the newly commissioned Electronic Countermeasures Squadron ONE, VQ-1. During this period, VQ-1 aircrews found themselves in the hottest spot of the Cold War, where during a short period, 33 incidents of attacks against squadron aircraft were recorded by both North Korean and Soviet aircraft. One of those attacks occurred during a routine reconnaissance flight over international waters in the Sea of Japan, off the North Korean coast. Flying as copilot in a VQ-1 P4M-1Q on 16 June 1959 at 7000 feet, LCDR Anania's Mercator was attacked without warning by two MIG fighters with 20 mm cannon fire, which immediately resulted in the one crewmember who could fight back, the rear tail gunner, suffering more than 40 shrapnel wounds. LCDR Anania remembered seeing the "red stars" of North Korea on the jets fuselage as he violently maneuvered, during several of the six gun passes the attackers made. The pilot and LCDR Anania, dove for the deck in an attempt to escape and by the time the Mercator reached 50 feet above the Sea of Japan, the P4M's starboard reciprocating and jet engines were inoperative, the rudder controls were shot away, with the aircraft suffering extensive damage to the fuselage and wings. Finally, the fighters broke away, but at this point the crew was given the order to prepare to ditch as it appeared impossible to keep the aircraft in the air. The pilot then worked with the crew to jettison everything that could be removed in order to lighten the aircraft. A P2-V joined on the Mercator but reported he couldn't get close enough to determine the extent of the damage because it appeared the aircraft was coming apart because of everything being jettisoned by the aircrew. While this was going on, LCDR Anania was credited by all for using his strength to keep the crippled aircraft airborne. The aircraft stayed airborne for the more than 300 mile leg to the nearest base, with the pilots safely landing at Miho Air Base, Japan without rudders and only the port engines for power. They saved their aircraft and the crew of 14. For their heroism and extraordinary flying ability LCDR Anania and the pilot, LCDR Don Mayer, were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, the highest award for an aviator on a "non-combat" mission. CAPT Anania transitioned to jet aircraft and eventually commanded VU-5 at NAF Atsugi in 1963, where he flew both RF-8A photo reconnaissance aircraft, eventually serving in Vietnam, marking his third time involved in a major combat zone during his career.