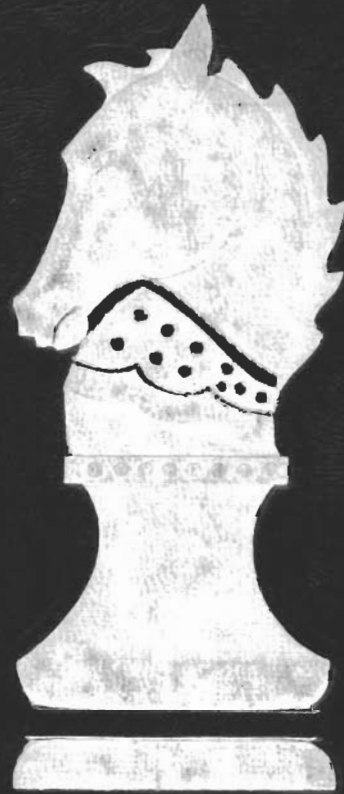




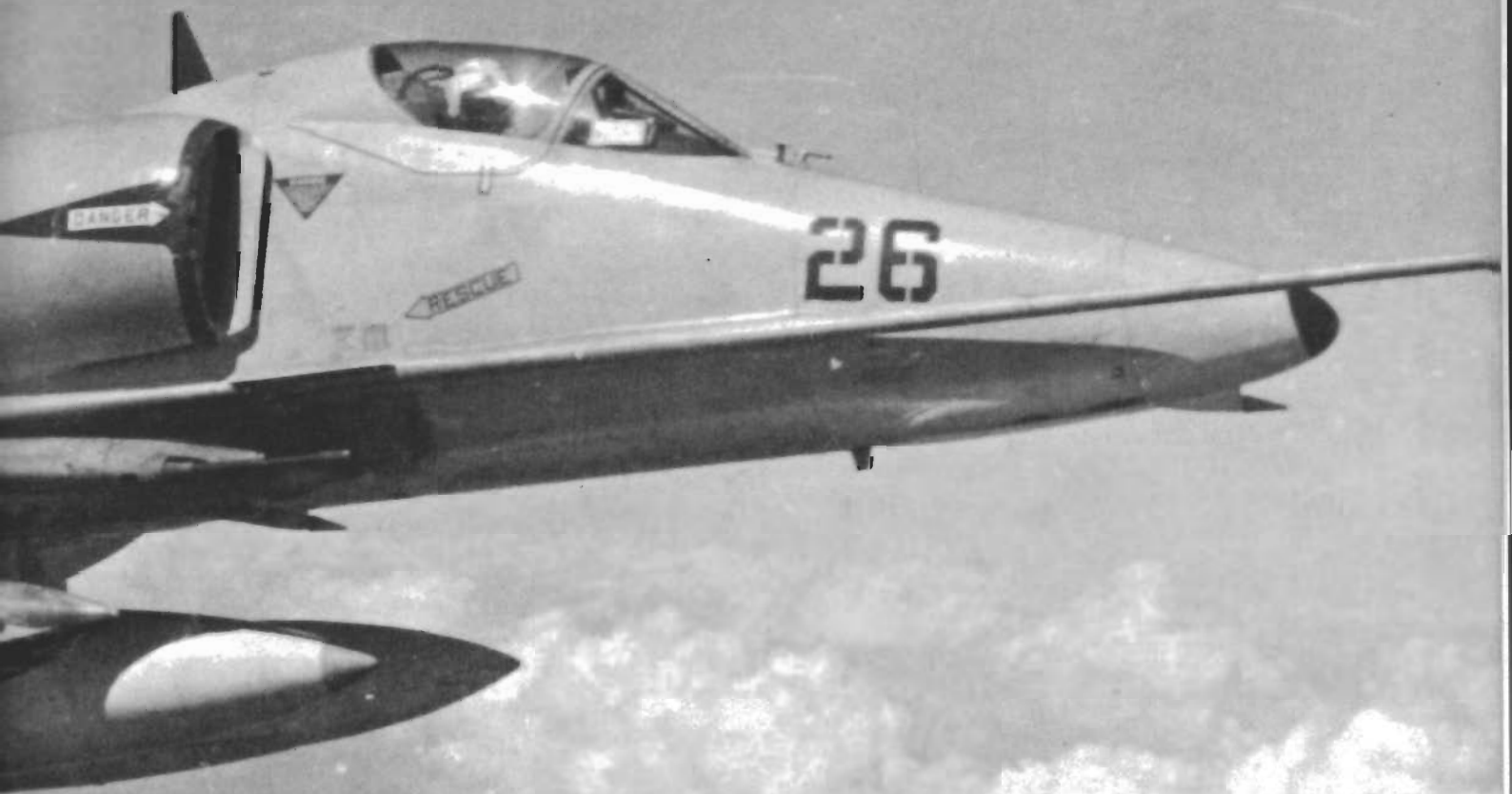
MARINE ATTACK SQUADRON
121



VIET NAM 67-68





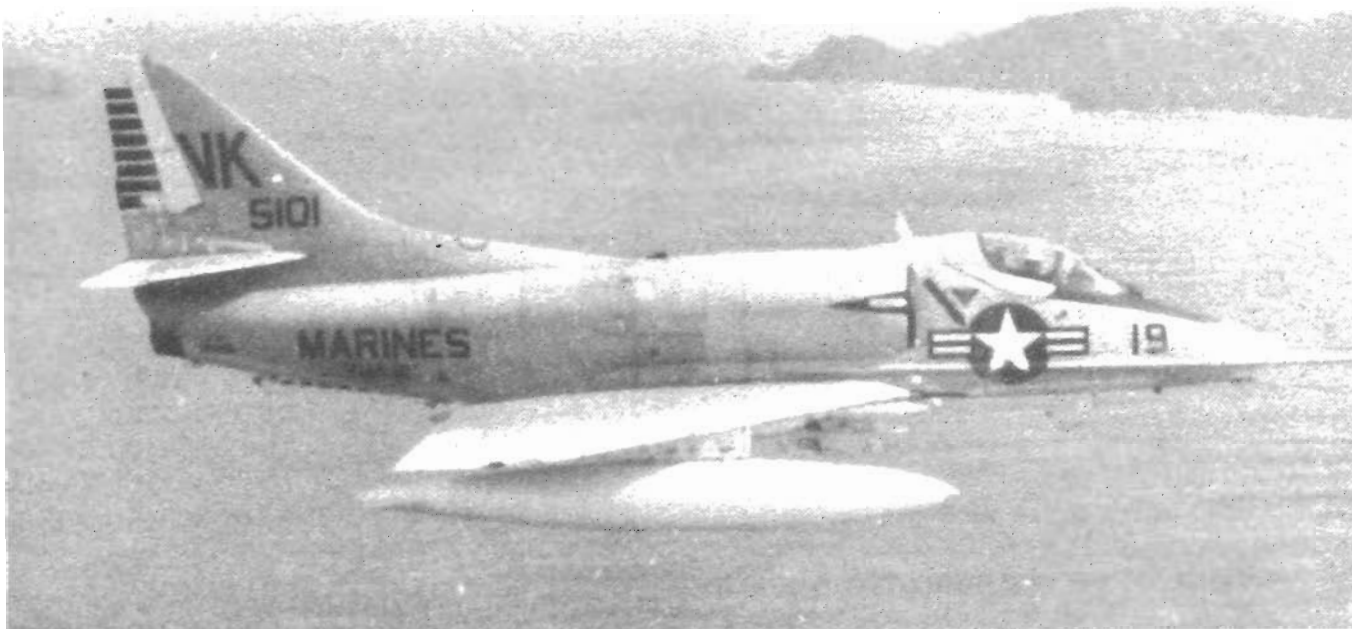


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DANGER

RESCUE

MARINE ATTACK SQUADRON 121



This Cruise Book is presented to the officers and enlisted men of VMA 121. Working hand in hand, they have instilled the spirit so essential to the framework of such a fine organization as '121. This book has been put together with the hopes that it will serve as a memento for all who were privileged to serve with VMA 121's "GREEN KNIGHTS".

In Memorium

"It is in giving that we receive, in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and in dying that we are born to eternal life."

Major Donald Bruce CAMPBELL

Captain Dale Alan LUSTER

First Lieutenant James R. REESE

In Dedication

First Lieutenant Walter Roy SCHMIDT, Jr.
Prisoner of War

THE KNIGHTS OF OLD

Marine Attack Squadron 121 was originally commissioned a fighter squadron on June 24, 1941. Four days after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the "Green Knights" moved to San Diego for intensive combat training, and left the states in August of 1942 to participate in the Marine Corps' first offensive of World War II--Guadalcanal.

The first step in the Pacific was New Caledonia, where VMF-121 remained until Henderson Field on Guadalcanal had been secured. Flying Grumman F4F's, the first echelon touched down at Henderson on September 25, 1942, and from then until almost 2 years later, pilots were entangled in a bitter struggle for air superiority. Captain Joe Foss, then XO of 121, and other great Marine Aces of the war made their marks in history during this period. Captain Foss, the second leading ace in Marine Corps history, scored 26 enemy kills and was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. While on Guadalcanal, 121 was awarded both the Presidential Unit Citation and the Navy Unit Citation.

After completion of three tours in the Solomen's, the squadron moved to MCAAJ Mojave in October of 1943, to be reoutfitted and retrained. Again, in July, 1944, 121 entered the Pacific Theatre, flying strikes against enemy installations at Pelilieu and Yap until the end of the war. The squadron returned to the states with an impressive record of 208 enemy kills, a record that was unsurpassed by any other Marine Squadron.

Reactivated at MCAS El Toro in 1946, after a brief period of decommissioning, 121 conducted routine training until the outbreak of the Korean Conflict. Redesignated VMA-121 and flying AD-2's, the squadron earned fame as the "Heavy Haulers" of Marine Aircraft Group 12 by dropping more tonnage of bombs, rockets, and napalm on enemy targets than any other squadron. After the Korean Armistice the squadron flew the AD Skyraider and the F-9 Panther in Korea, Japan, and MCAS El Toro. In the fall of 1958, VMA-121 received the new A4D-2 Skyhawks at El Toro.

From 1960 to 1965, VMA 121 served in five Far Eastern countries and aboard the two carriers, USS TICONDEROGA and USS CORAL SEA. They also deployed to NAS Cecil Field, Florida, during the Cuban Crisis of 1962.

The squadron returned to El Toro in April, 1965, and began re-forming that same month. VMA-121 trained extensively in conventional weapons delivery in preparation for their deployment to the Vietnam war zone. In August of 1966, the "Green Knights" flew their A4E Skyhawks across the Pacific to Iwakuni, Japan. They made their final preparations and completed extended training prior to 121's deployment to Chu Lai, Rvn, and assumed combat operations on 1 December, 1966. Vma-121 made its mark on the record books of the Vietnam War when, in May of 1967, its last month of combat operations before deploying to Iwakuni for training, 121 dropped ordnance in excess of 1700 tons, shattering all previous records.

Returning to Chu Lai in September of 1967, the "Green Knights" continued their impressive record as a top Marine Attack Squadron.



COMMANDING OFFICER

Lieutenant Colonel William D.
SHIPPEN

Lieutenant Colonel SHIPPEN was born in Osceola, Arkansas on 29 January 1929. After completing high school he entered Georgia Tech, and in June, 1951, graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in Industrial Management. It was through the NROTC program in college that LtCol SHIPPEN earned his regular commission in September 1951 as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps. After completing the Officer's Basic School, he attended the Army's Artillery School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

During the Korean conflict, LtCol SHIPPEN served with the 11th Marines in Korea as an artillery forward observer, battery liaison officer, and later, as executive officer. After Korea he entered flight training, and was designated a Naval Aviator on 1 April 1955. LtCol SHIPPEN's first tactical squadron was VMCJ-2 at Cherry Point, North Carolina from October 1955 to June 1957. He then moved to Beaufort, South Carolina to serve in the S-2 section of H&MS-32 until January 1958.

Back flying tactically again with VMF 122 through May 1959, LtCol SHIPPEN flew the FSU Crusader. This tour was immediately followed by a tour as aviation safety officer of VMCJ-2 at Cherry Point.

Moving into the attack field of Marine Aviation the Colonel flew the A4 Skyhawk with VMA-332 from October 1960 to October 1962.

Returning stateside from Japan, LtCol SHIPPEN was a flight instructor in VT-25 at Beeville, Texas until July 1965. He then served on the staff of the Commander in Chief, Pacific at Pearl Harbor, where he assisted in the organization of the CINPAC Airborne Command Post.

In September 1967 LtCol SHIPPEN deployed to Chu Lai in the Republic of Vietnam serving with MAG-12 as its S-4 officer until March 1968. At that time he accepted command of the VMA 121 "GREEN KNIGHTS", the top Marine A4E squadron in Vietnam.

Lieutenant Colonel SHIPPEN has received the Air Medal, Navy Commendation Medal (Combat V), Naval Unit Commendation, Marine Corps Expeditionary, Korean Presidential Unit Citation, National Defense Medal, Korean Service Medal, Vietnamese Service Medal, and the Vietnamese Campaign Medal.

The Skipper and his wife, Lin, have three sons, Bill, Jr. 16, Frank 14 and Alan 1. His hobbies include hunting, fishing, golf, and photography.

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS



LtCol G. H. BARLOW
Mobile, Ala.
25 Feb. 68-26 May 68



Major R. E. BRIGHT
Port Arthur, Texas
27 May 68-4 Aug. 68



Major D. A. LERPS
Eastchester, New York
5 Aug. 68-14 Oct. 68



Major J. G. MORGAN
Montgomery, Ala.



Major N. L. DERICKSON
Philadelphia, Pa.



Major G. G. KEMP
Moscow, Idaho



Major H. R. WARFIELD III
Riviera Beach, Fla.



Major J. D. INGRAHAM



Major F. C. REGAN
Dorchester, Mass.



Major S. M. HORTON
Pageland, South Carolina



Major T. R. DURHAM
Kailua, Hawaii

OFFICERS



Capt. S. F. LANKFORD
North Wilkesboro, North
Carolina



Capt. D. W. MUIR
Huntsville, Ala.



Capt. R. L. CRANE
Honolulu, Hawaii



Major L. D. TYRRELL
Moscow, Idaho



Capt. R. GNAZZO
Torrington, Conn.



Capt. E. R. MOORE
New Bern, North Carolina



Capt. R. J. STOCKING
St. Louis, Missouri



Major R. T. WARD
Belleville, New Jersey



Capt. J. D. ELMORE
Gordo, Ala.



Capt. J. C. BUFFINGTON
Minneapolis, Minn.



Capt. D. L. WALTON
San Antonio, Texas



Capt. R. J. RAUENHORST
Easton, Minn.



Capt. T. W. CARTER III
Riverhead, New York



Capt. T. C. FLANAGAN
New Cumberland, Pa.



Capt. H. A. HAMILTON
Dover, Ohio



Capt. L. K. STEPHENS
Paris, Illinois

