

# CAPTAIN RONALD J. ZLATOPER

COMMANDER, CARRIER AIR WING FIFTEEN



Carrier Air Wing FIFTEEN is comprised of nine squadrons flying seven types of aircraft. Commissioned in 1943 at Norfolk, Va., CVW-15 is currently based at NAS Miramar, Calif., and is the first to deploy under the new enhanced Air Wing command structure established by the Chief of Naval Operations in April 1985. Led by its Air Wing Commander, Capt. Ronald J. Zlatoper, the Air Wing is now a designated major command at sea and has amassed more than 18,000 hours and 7,500 traps on deployments, while operating in environments throughout the Western Pacific, ranging from the tropical Indian Ocean to the frigid Bering Sea.

The Air Wing Staff is made up of 12 officers, 7 chief petty officers and 10 enlisted personnel. Deputy Air Wing Commander, Cdr. Lyle G. Bien, organizes and coordinates the many administrative and operational tasks required to keep the Air Wing operating at peak proficiency. The Wing's motto, "Strength, Unity, Bravery," typifies its commitment to maintaining the highest standards of combat readiness.

Captain Ronald J. Zlatoper, a native of Cleveland, Ohio, entered the Navy in June 1963 through the NROTC program. Commissioned after graduation from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, he completed flight training and was designated a Naval Aviator in November 1964.

Following A-6A replacement pilot training, Captain Zlatoper reported to Attack Squadron SIXTY FIVE in the spring of 1965. During this tour, he flew combat missions over North Vietnam while deployed aboard **USS CONSTELLATION (CV-64)** and **USS FORRESTAL (CV-59)**.

Assigned to Attack Squadron FORTY TWO in March 1968, Captain Zlatoper served as a flight instructor and familiarization phase head in the A-6 replacement training squadron at NAS Oceana, Va., while obtaining a Masters Degree from George Washington University.

In April 1970, Captain Zlatoper became one of the initial officer cadre to commission Attack Squadron THIRTY FOUR, completing two Mediterranean deployments aboard **USS JOHN F. KENNEDY (CV-67)**. He served as the Training Officer, Assistant Maintenance Officer and Operations Officer in the squadron prior to being selected to attend the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, in August 1972.

After completing the War College curriculum, Captain Zlatoper was presented the William S. Sims Award as the outstanding Command and Staff student. Chosen as a CNO Scholar for 1974, he then attended Massachusetts Institute of Technology where he earned a Master of Science Degree before reporting for duty on the Staff in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OPNAV), Washington, D.C.

From July 1975 through November 1977, Captain Zlatoper served in the Aircraft and Weapons Requirements Branch (OP-506) of OPNAV. He reported to Attack Squadron EIGHTY-FIVE in May 1978 as Executive Officer, then Commanding Officer of the "Black Falcons," assuming command in June 1979. He made two extended deployments aboard **USS FORRESTAL (CV-59)**.

Captain Zlatoper then served on the Secretary of the Navy's staff as the Executive Assistant to the Director, Office of Program Appraisal, and as Readiness Officer on the staff of the Commander, Tactical Wings Atlantic. In July 1982, he assumed command of Carrier Air Wing ONE with 95 aircraft and nine squadrons onboard **USS AMERICA (CV-66)**. During the next 14 months, he led them on deployments to the Caribbean, North Atlantic, Mediterranean, and Indian Ocean.

From August 1983 until May 1985, Captain Zlatoper served as the Military Assistant to the Secretary of Defense.

Captain Zlatoper's decorations include the Defense Distinguished Service Medal, the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Air Medal and the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V". He has over 4,000 flight hours and 1,000 carrier landings in Navy jet aircraft; is a designated subspecialist in financial management; has published articles on naval strategy, military logistics and management; and is listed in the 1973 edition of "Outstanding Young Men of America."

Captain Zlatoper resides in San Diego, Calif., with his wife the former Barry Lane Oliver of Virginia Beach. The Zlatopers have two children, Ashley and Michael.



COMMANDER LYLE G. BIEN  
DEPUTY AIR WING COMMANDER