

William Mason Russell Captain US Navy, Ret.

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William M. Russell was born in Fort Worth, Texas on March 14, 1925. He spent his youth in Denton, Texas where his father owned the Russell's Department Store. He attended the University of Texas for one year before entering the US Naval Academy, graduating in the class of 1947. His initial assignment in the navy was aboard the USS LEYTE (CV-32), followed by flight training and subsequent sea duty assignments to various fighter squadrons. He graduated, first in class, from the US Naval Test Pilot School in 1956, attended the US Naval War College 1960 - 1961, commanded fighter Squadron 211 1962-1963, and received a masters degree in Business Administration from the US Naval Post Graduate School 1964. Other assignments were as personal aide to the Vice Chief of Naval Operations in 1964 - 1965, navigator and air officer of the USS KITTYHAWK 9CVA-63) 1966-1967, Office of Secretary of Defense (DDR&E) 1967-1969, and the Industrial College of the Armed Forces in 1969-1970.

Before retirement on June 30, 1976, his last three assignments were Commanding Officer USS CAMDON (AOE-2) 1970-1971, Assistant Chief of Staff for Operations 7th Fleet 1072-1973, and Deputy Commander Naval Air Test Center at Patuxent River, MD 1973-1976.

Since retirement, Bill built two SCHREDER HP-18 sailplanes, a STODDARD HAMILTON SH-1 GLASAIR, and a LANCAIR LC-20, which he flew throughout the United States, and won most of the air races he competed in. Before selling his LANCAIR (POOH BEAR the name he gave to all his planes), he was active in the Young Eagle Program, taking young people flying, trying to instill the love of flight that he had.

He is survived by his wife Billie, his sons, Frederick Mars Russell and Fred Yannone and daughter Yavone Evans, six grandchildren, eight great-grandchildren and his beloved dog THE DUDE.