



CAPT Harmon T. Utter **Commanding Officer**

On 1 May 1957, CAPT Harmon T. Utter relieved CAPT Ray C. Needham as commanding officer of the WASP. CAPT Utter was born in Neville, Ohio. Following his graduation from the Naval Academy in 1932, CAPT Utter was ordered to the USS SALT LAKE CITY. In 1935 he took his flight training at NAS Pensacola, Florida.

In 1937, he was ordered to the USS RANGER with VF-4. He served aboard the USS NORTHAMPTON in 1939, and the following year was flight instructor at NAS Pensacola. Late in 1940, he commissioned and served at NAS Miami, Florida.

Shortly before World War II broke out, CAPT Utter was in Manila serving with VP-101. On 10 December 1941 his PB4Y was shot down by two Japanese Zeroes. On Christmas of the same year, his plane was burned on the water by enemy aircraft. He spent six weeks on Bataan and escaped to Java via submarine, from there to Australia, and finally, in 1942, he returned to the States.

He served with Fleet Air Wing 9 until the Spring of 1943, from there he was transferred to the Naval Torpedo Testing Station on Long Island. In 1944, he commissioned Carrier Air Group 83 in Atlantic City. One year later, the air group went aboard the USS ESSEX. In September of 1945, the group was decommissioned.

He was aboard the USS LEYTE when she was commissioned in 1946. He served as Air Officer on the LEYTE from October 1945 until June 1947. His next assignment was Assistant Director of Training on the Chief of Naval Air Training staff.

Nineteen forty-eight found him at NAS Cabiness Field, Corpus Christi, Texas, where he served as Executive Officer. A year later, he was sent to the Armed Forces Staff College at Norfolk, Va. He was Plans Officer with ComAirLant staff in 1950.

In 1952, he was Assistant Chief of Staff and Plans and Operations Officer of ComStrikeFor, Naples, Italy. He was the commanding officer of NAS Anacostia in 1953.

Before reporting to ComTaskGroup 7.3 in 1955, he served as commanding officer of the USS MONTEREY.