

Russ Bartlett

Commander, U.S. Navy

Flight Leader/Commanding Officer

Commander Russ Bartlett was born into an Army family at Fort Benning, Georgia. He spent the majority of his childhood on Nantucket Island, off the coast of Massachusetts. In 1979 he graduated from Nauset Regional High School on Cape Cod, where he was captain of the varsity wrestling team and enjoyed an undefeated season during his senior year. He also lettered in varsity cross country and track and field, specializing in the two-mile run and pole vault. In 1979, he reported to the U.S. Naval Academy, where he lettered in varsity lightweight crew. He graduated in 1983 with a Bachelor of Science degree in aerospace engineering.

After graduation Russ reported to Pensacola, Florida, for flight training. He completed primary flight training at Naval Air Station (NAS) Whiting Field, Florida, in the T-34 Turbo Mentor and then transferred to NAS Beeville, Texas, for intermediate and advanced flight training in the T-2 Buckeye and the A-4 Skyhawk. He received his wings of gold in September 1985, and reported to Air Antisubmarine Squadron 41(VS 41), NAS North Island, California, for training in the S-3A Viking.

Russ' first fleet tour was with the VS 24 "Scouts" at NAS Cecil Field, Florida, where he was a landing signal officer. He made two deployments to the Mediterranean Sea, one aboard *USS Nimitz* (CVN 68) and the other aboard *USS Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71). In 1989, Russ was selected by the Association of Naval Aviation and Sea Strike Wing One as the 1989 S-3 Pilot of the Year. Upon completion of his tour, he was selected for transition to the F/A-18 Hornet.

In May 1990, after initial F/A-18 training at Strike Fighter Squadron 106 (VFA 106), Russ reported to the VFA 15 "Valions" where he deployed aboard the carrier *USS Theodore Roosevelt* (CVN 71) in support of *Operation Desert Shield*. Later in that deployment, he took the Hornet to war, flying 33 combat sorties during Operation Desert Storm. After two consecutive sea tours and three cruises, Russ returned to VFA 106 in March 1992 as an instructor pilot, replacement pilot control officer and assistant training officer.

In August 1993, Russ joined the VFA 195 "Dambusters" at Naval Air Facility (NAF) Atsugi, Japan. From 1993 to 1995, he made two Arabian Gulf deployments aboard *USS Independence* (CV 62) in support of *Operation Southern Watch* and the U.S. presence near North Korea. He served as the safety officer, maintenance officer and operations officer.

After leaving Japan, Russ attended the Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island. He graduated with distinction, earning a Master of Arts degree in national security and strategic studies and was recognized as the president's "Honor Graduate" for his class. Upon graduation, he was selected as an Associate Fellow for the Chief of Naval Operations' Strategic Studies Group.

In May 1997, Russ was selected to serve at the Joint Special Operations Command (JSOC) at Fort Bragg, N.C. He was the Navy Tactical Air (TACAIR) Representative, J3 Current Operations Directorate, Fire Support Cell.

In September 1999, Russ returned to Japan for his command tour with VFA 195. He reported as the Executive Officer and assumed command on Dec. 7, 2000. He deployed twice aboard *USS Kitty Hawk* (CV 63), planning and participating in numerous international exercises with Japanese, South Korean, Thai, Singaporean and Australian naval and air forces. His squadron also supported the U.S. presence near North Korea and the fight against terrorism in *Operation Enduring Freedom*.

Russ has accumulated more than 3,800 flight hours in Navy aircraft and 840 carrier arrested landings. His decorations include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, three Strike Flight Air Medals, four Navy Commendation Medals with Combat Distinguishing Device, Joint Service Achievement Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, NATO Medal, three Battle Efficiency Awards, numerous Armed Forces and unit commendation medals and various other campaign, unit and service awards.