

## **ROBERT ROSS RENNER**

LCDR Robert R. Renner, USN, died 27 September as the result of an aircraft accident aboard USS RANGER. He was the pilot of an RA-5C Vigilante whose tailhook separated from the aircraft on landing. The aircraft proceeded over the side of the carrier. Neither he nor his Reconnaissance Attack Navigator, Lt. Max E. Joseph, USNR, was recovered.

LCDR Renner was born in Floral Park, N.Y. He graduated from USNA in 1960. After graduation he worked with the new plebe class. He then reported to the Naval Aviation Training Command where he was designated a naval aviator in March 1962. Subsequently, he reported to the A-4 RAG, Attack Squadron 44, and then to his first fleet squadron, ATKRON 106, where he flew the A-4. After 20 months in this squadron, he was selected for the A-5A program. He received his RAG training in Reconnaissance Attack Squadron Three in Sanford, FL, and was then order to RECONATKRON THIRTEEN. During his tour in RECONATKRON THIRTEEN, he completed two combat tours in Vietnam and was awarded the following decorations: the Distinguished Flying Cross, nine Air Medals, three Navy Commendation Medals with Combat "V," two Navy Unit Commendation Ribbons, four Vietnam Service Medals, the National Defense Service Medal, the Navy Achievement Medal and the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal.

After completing his tour in RECONATKRON THIRTEEN, LCDR Renner reported to the RA-5 RAG, RECONATKRON THREE, where he served as an instructor and LSO for three years. After his tour in the RAG, he reported to RECONATKRON ONE where he was serving at the time of his death. On his last flight he completed 1000 hours in the A-5. He is survived by his widow, Carole Lee of Albany, GA, three sons, Eric Robert, Scott Robert, and Mark Robert; and his parents, Mr. and Mrs. William E. Renner of Baldwin, N.Y.

*SHIPMATE, January 1971*

Although I didn't know Bob Renner while I was going to the Naval Academy, I had met him and knew that he was flying RA-5Cs in Albany, GA. So, I looked him up upon arrival to the RA-5C community in June 1969, where he was living with his wife Carol and their two sons. Since Bob was the senior RAG (RVAH-3) LSO, it turned out that I spent a lot of time with him over the next six months. Bob had transitioned to the A-5 attack community with several other great "sticks" as a LTJG. In 1969, as a LCDR, he had already made several RA-5C deployments, including at least one in combat in SE ASIA. His sharp wit, outgoing personality and superb flying ability made him a highly respected standout in the recce community.

After I completed RAG training, I was sent to RVAH-1. Since this squadron had recently returned from deployment, it was not scheduled for a SE ASIA deployment for about another year. During that time at NAS Albany, GA, June and I saw Bob and Carol at different recce events and had dinners at each other's homes. As RVAH-1's deployment aboard U.S.S. RANGER (CV-61) neared, our squadron LSO decided to turn in his wings. Since Bob was about the only available LSO who was current in the RA-5C, he suddenly found himself assigned to RVAH-1 as the LSO working us up for the rapidly nearing deployment. In September 1970, RANGER was conducting carrier operations off the southern coast of California, preparing for an October departure to WestPac. On a routine day recovery, Bob's OK-3 approach ended in catastrophe when the tail hook separated from RA-5C after it had

slowed to roughly 60 kts. Bob initially tried to get the airplane flying but had to quickly resort to an ejection. The timing was such that he and his navigator ejected under water and were never found. Bob was so highly respected by the RA-5C community that there was an effort to change the name of the airfield at NAS Albany to his name. However, before that happened, the RA-5C community was moved to Key West, FL.

*Gene Gasser, 7th Co  
30<sup>th</sup> Year Book*