

Capt. Walter E. Ohlrich, Jr., USN Ret.
Virginia Beach, Virginia



Inducted in 2006, Walter E. Ohlrich soloed at age 16 in a PT-17 Stearman and obtained a pilot's license at age 17. He joined the United States Navy and became a fighter pilot during the transition era from prop to jet aircraft. He served in the military for 33 years. His career included being a flight instructor, production test pilot and A-4 Skyhawk Project officer at the Douglas Co., a Pentagon tour and flew with three A-4 Skyhawk squadrons. He served one combat tour flying A-4 Skyhawks aboard the USS Intrepid in Viet Nam and later commanded Attack Squadron 95 aboard the USS Shangri-La. He earned the Distinguished Flying Cross, Navy Commendation Medal with Combat V, five Air Medals and the Meritorious Service Medal. After serving as the Commander of the Nuclear Weapons Training Group, Atlantic he retired from the Navy in 1978 as a Captain. Concurrent to his Navy career, he remained active in civilian flying. Ohlrich began air racing in Reno in 1964 flying an F8F Bearcat. In the spring of 1965 he founded the "Warbirds of America", a division of the Experimental Aircraft Association, which is dedicated to the preservation and flying of WWII and other ex-military aircraft, and served as its first president. Subsequent to Navy retirement, he co-authored a book entitled "Pilot Maker – the story of the T-6 Texan" and has served on the Reno Air Race Contest Committee for 18 years. He has been a licensed pilot for 60 years and has 11 Warbird-type ratings.