

AVIATION WALL OF HONOR



ACW3 Kenneth N. Morin United States Navy

Kenneth N. Morin was born on November 13, 1939 and was raised in Gwinn, Michigan. He graduated from Gwinn High School in 1957.

He joined the Navy in 1957 and was stationed at the Naval Air Station, Agana, Guam, with the Airborne Early Warning Squadron VW-3.

This unit provided cover for the 7th Fleet. He also served in Typhoon Tracking from 1957 to 1959.

During this period, the majority of the 10 to 14 hour-long flights were out of NAS Atsugi, Japan, NAS Naha, Okinawa, or NAS Cubi Point, Philippines. In the latter years, fighter control, radar, and electronic counter-measures were provided for the Straits of Taiwan during the conflict between nationalist and mainland China. The pilots from the Peoples Republic of China relentlessly bombed Taiwan and the islands of Quemey and Matsu.

Using 250 mile radar and height finder radar, the Combat Information Teams aboard the Lockheed Warning Star Super Constellation (Naval Designation RC-121 WV-2) were able to inform Nationalist Chinese pilots of enemy aircraft position, course, speed, and altitude making "bogie" interception possible. Passive ECM was used to plot Mainland Chinese radar-controlled weapons installations. Years later, the U.S. Government admitted to and finally recognized this mission, authorizing an Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal for the conflict.

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The VW-3 unit was deployed to Hawaii in May and June of 1958 to provide airborne reconnaissance of Russian spy ships during the last atmospheric hydrogen bomb test on Eniwetok Atoll, Marshall Islands in the Pacific, called Operation Hardtack. The crew received a written commendation from Commander Fleet Airwing, Hawaii for operational excellence.

Morin's second tour was with WV-1 out of Barbers Point, Hawaii. The AEW Squadrons were used in the extension of the Distant Early Warning Line (DEW line) to protect the west coast. Crews rotated from Hawaii to Midway Island every several weeks to fly these non-stop missions to the Aleutian Islands in the North Pacific. Numerous WV-2 aircraft were in the air at the same time providing overlapping radar sweeps covering 100,000 square miles six times a minute. In flights lasting 14 to 16 hours at 40 degrees North Latitude, crews were required to don bulky survival suits. The Lockheed "Super Connie" was indomitable in horrific icing conditions equipped with pulsating hydraulic ribs that broke ice off all leading wing surfaces. Credit must be given to Clarence "Kelly" Johnson of Ishpeming and Lockheed for building such a beautiful, powerful, and strongly built aircraft.

Other missions included flying into the eye of typhoons to map their track, intensity, and speed for early warning to the Pacific Rim countries. For these efforts, he was awarded a Certificate of Recognition signed by Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld for his service in the Cold War.

During his career as a psychologist, Dr. Morin served as a tenured professor at Georgia State University and at Northern Michigan University, and had adjunct professorships at the Michigan State University School of Medicine and at Michigan Tech University.

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He has also served in a consulting capacity to NASA, Pan American Airlines, and the U.S. Olympic Committee.

Dr. Morin is married to Viive (Akel) of Negaunee and has two daughters, Kellie and Tiina.

TJ Mudge, Oct. 2005

