

## COMMANDER PAUL SHANKLAND



Commander Paul D. "Happy" Shankland, a native of Greensboro, North Carolina, graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1983 with a Bachelor of Science degree in pure mathematics. Upon graduation he served as First Lieutenant, Gunnery Liaison Officer, Self Defense Force Officer, Nuclear Weapons Security Officer, and the CIC Officer aboard the destroyer USS SELLERS (DDG-11), where he earned Surface Warfare Officer designation deployed overseas.

In 1986 CDR Shankland laterally transferred to the aviation community and earned his Wings at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi by 1987 as an E2C Hawkeye pilot. He then returned to the Fleet with VAW-122 "Steeljaws" of Carrier Airwing Six aboard USS FORRESTAL (CV-59), during which he served in Desert Storm/Provide Comfort as Aircraft Maintenance, Administration, and as Assistant Operations Officers while a Carrier Plane Commander and Strike Lead. In 1991 he was nominated "Hawkeye of the Year" and was a Carrier "Top Hook" twice. That year he returned to VAW-120 (the Greyhawks) as a Carrier Instructor Pilot and the squadron's Administrative Department Head. In 1992 he became the Carrier AEW Wing Atlantic Administrative Officer, Manpower Director (earning a Manpower subspecialty designation), and Wing Security/Top Secret Control Manager, while remaining a Fleet Replacement Instructor Pilot.

In 1994, CDR Shankland joined VAW-121 aboard USS GEORGE WASHINGTON (CVN-73) where he served as Safety Department Head after a stint at Naval Postgraduate School, and then became the Aircraft Maintenance Department Head and Second Senior Pilot to the CO. While there he completed deployments to the Mediterranean, Red and Adriatic Seas (in combat zones over Bosnia), the Arabian Gulf (and Iraq no-fly zone) and gained a second subspecialty designation, in Command and Control operations. In 1996 Commander Shankland transferred to Joint Interagency Task Force East at NAS Key West, where he served as the admiral's Naval Liaison Officer for counterdrug interdiction in South and Central America, the Caribbean and the Eastern Pacific, and coordinating in country international, law enforcement and DoD Air operations. Commander Shankland returned to sea in December 1999, joining USS THEODORE ROOSEVELT (CVN71) in Norfolk, Virginia, as the Strike Operations Officer for "TR" and her Battle Group, to include Joint Forces Air Command and Control reorganization and, ultimately, the first response, post 911 Operation Enduring Freedom/Afghani wartime deployment.

CDR Shankland subsequently transferred to NAS Meridian as Executive Officer of Strike Training Squadron NINE. On 12 June 2003, he took command of VT-9 the Navy's largest aviation squadron as its 40th Commanding Officer since commissioning in 1961. In the course of his tenure the Tigers earned the CNO Safety "S" during a comprehensive fifteen month transition from the T2C "Buckeye" (retiring 87 jets at \$217 Million), to the all-digital T45C "Super Goshawk" (inducting 97, representing \$2.37 Billion). While commanding the Tigers, CDR Shankland completed a Masters of Astronomy with Distinction (summa cum laude), with theses in Quasar spectral analysis of the fine structure constant, naval historical astronomy, and extrasolar planet dynamics (to include airborne observatory detection). CDR Shankland since concluded his PhD dissertation in astronomy, specializing in exoplanet detection and analyses, orbital dynamics and dwarf star radio/optical astronomy detection. He is principle investigator in M dwarf exoplanet research using the Very Large Array, Lick Observatory, and the Spitzer Space Telescope, and authored papers in the *Astrophysical Journal*, *Astronomical Journal*, *Bulletin of the American Astronomical Society*, *Astrobiology Journal*, *Journal of the Astronomical History and Heritage*, *Journal of the Antique Telescope Society*, and various magazines.

In 2004 CDR Shankland joined the staff of U.S. Naval Observatory, Washington, D.C., where he is Director of Space Acquisitions, Programs, Plans & Requirements (N5/N8), and has additional responsibilities to OPNAV N84 as chief of Space PNT Capabilities. CDR Shankland collaborates and liaisons with the scientific/technical communities throughout and outside the DoD; with national Position-Navigation-Time (PNT), GPS, astrometric, Intelligence (ISR) and space committees, for programs such as the Joint Milliarsecond Pathfinder (J-MAPS), Origins Billion Star Survey (OBSS) Satellites, long baseline radio and optical interferometry; with the Pentagon; with academic/research institutions; and with several senior government staffs. CDR Shankland has advanced USNO awareness as intern mentor to four Naval Academy and Yale scholars. He was recently awarded the DoD Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal for astronomy education public outreach, and earned a Space Professional subspecialty.

CDR Shankland has accumulated over 3800 hours and has flown 374 arrested carrier landings. His decorations include 3 Meritorious Service Medals, 3 Navy Marine Commendation Medals, 3 Navy Marine Corps Achievement Medals, 4 Joint Meritorious Unit Awards, 2 Meritorious Unit Commendations, the Navy Unit Commendation, the Command Battle "E", and 29 other unit/campaign medals. CDR Shankland is a full member of the American Astronomical Society (Division on Dynamical Astronomy, Division for Planetary Sciences, Historical Astronomy Division), the American Institute of Physics, the Astronomical League, the International Dark Sky Association, is a foundational member of the International Astronomical Union (IAU) Commission for History of Astronomy, the IAU Commission for Extrasolar Planets, the Institute of Navigation (ION), the Tailhook Foundation, the Association of Naval Aviation (ANA), the Professional Association of Diving Instructors (PADI), and the International Sled Dog Racing Association (ISDRA).