Ken Udcoff Shares His VMA-132 Experiences

I enlisted at NASNY (Floyd Bennett) in the summer of 1962 and departed for the “Island”, MCRD P.I. shortly thereafter. At the time of my enlistment, the record shows that I was attached to VMF 313. Returning to NASNY after ADT I was assigned to the newly formed VMA 132 which apparently replaced VMF 313. VMA 132 operated A4-B’s and later A4-A’s all the time of my enlistment. If memory serves me correctly, we received the A’s in 66 or 67 as they were replacing our B’s which had the refueling probe and were requested by the “active fleet” as replacement birds. The Skipper was Lt/Col Ireland, the X/O Maj Hendershot. The aircraft were painted with the 7R base designation on the vertical stabilizer along with NAVY/MARINES on aft side of the fuselage.  I recall that we had a sister squadron VMA 131 and guessed that the NAVY designation signified a USN squadron that had use of the aircraft as well, but I cannot be sure of that.

During my tenure with VMA 132 we deployed to NAS Roosevelt Roads twice, once to MCAS Yuma and finally to MCAS El Toro where the tragedy occurred. By the way the subject tragedy was not the first as we lost another precious life on one of my NAS Roosevelt Roads deployments. I left VMA 132 in the fall of 1967 at NASNY when my enlistment was up so I have no relationship with the base closure and new home at NAS Willow Grove.

I am attaching several pictures that may be of interest. Myself a P/Cpt at NAS RR in 1963, a group photo of the 1963 USMC Ball and finally the last gathering of the Old Timers club in 2018. You might recognize the Skipper and X/O front and center along with others. Be aware that when comparing photos some of those athletic types have become very old farts.

I live in DFW, Texas and by chance have become acquainted with a former VMA 132 pilot at the local gym by the name of Bruce Wanger.





