

Date: 2 February 2026

Golden Eagles Membership Nomination

Sponsor: CAPT Mike O'Connor, USN (Ret.) Mobile: (619)-777-3759
Email: moconnorusna62@gmail.com

Co-Sponsor: CAPT Gene Pellerin, USN (Ret.) Mobile: (619)-889-5129
Email: genep1@cox.net

Nominee Information: CAPT William "Bill" Personius, USN (Ret.)

Rank/Name: CAPT Bill Personius, USN (Ret.) Spouse's Name: Mary/Molly Personius

Date of Birth: 06 January 1958 (Elmira, NY) Naval Aviator Date: 14 August 1981

Active/Retired Status: Retired Active-Duty Dates: 05/1980-05/2010 (30)

Address: 9072 Meadowrun Place San Diego, CA 92129-3319

Mobile Phone: (858)-449-1726 Email: billpersonius@gmail.com

Total Flight Hours: 5,048 Military Flight Hours: 5,048 NVD Flight Hours: 140

Carrier/Ship Landings Rotary: MSS: (CV(N), LHA, LPH, LPD): D:776 / N:59 / NVD: 12

SSS: (CG, DDG, FF, AE, AFS): D:1,273 / N:372 / NVD: 25

Flight Hours: 5,048 Helo: 4,955 Prop: 93

Total number of different type aircraft flown: 5

Flight Hours by Type: **T-34C**: 93, **H-57A/B/C**: 1,822, **H-46**: 2,594, **H-1E,L,N**: 481, **H-60**: 53

Combat Tours:

22 Aug 1990 - 31 Aug 1991 - Gulf War/Desert Shield/Storm

Aug 2001 - Jul 2004 - NEO Express, Texas Thunder, Nautical Union, Eagle Resolve, Edged Mallet, Infinite Moonlight, Neon Falcon, Eager Mace, and Vigilant Sentinel

11 Sep 2001 - 31 May 2010 - Global War on Terrorism

Combat/Other Flight Performance Awards/Aircraft Qualifications:

TH-57: Fam, BI, RI, RI-18 Check Pilot, Stan, Tactics, Formation, Flight Lead, Ship, VERTREP
Accumulated over 5,000 mishap free flight hours of which approximately 2,000 were as an instructor pilot in HT-18.

HT-18 Instructor of the quarter for 1986

Special Instrument Rating

H-46: FRS Instructor, FCF, SAR, SPECOPS Tactics: VBSS (Visit Board Search and Seizure), SPIE (Special Insertion/Extraction), Helocast, Fast-Rope/Rappelling, Paradrop, Marine Mammal Movement, NVD Centurian (100+ NVD Hours)

Aviation Commands Held/Dates:

Jun 1996 - Sept 1998	Commanding Officer	HC-11
Apr 2000 - June 2001	Commanding Officer	HC-3
Mar 2003 - Aug 2006	Commanding Officer	USS PELELIU, LHA-5
Jan 2009 - May 2010	Officer in Charge	MH-60R/S UAV Fleet Introduction Team

Duty Assignments Chronology:

May 1976 - Oct 1980 **US Naval Academy** - Student
Oct 1980 - **VT-3** - Red Knights - Student
Aug 1981 - **HT-8/HT-18** Eightballers/Vigilant Eagles - Student
Oct 1981 - Sep 1984 - **HC-3** - Pac Rats - H-46 FRS Student/Instructor Pilot
USS WHITE PLAINS, AFS-4
USNS KILEUEA, TAE-26 - Initial Deployment of a H-46 Detachment on USNS Ship*
*Continuous 179 Days at sea during an 8 Month Deployment
Oct 1984 - Apr 1987 - **HT-18** - Vigilant Eagles - Instructor Pilot
Apr 1987 - Jul 1989 - **USS TARAWA, LHA-1** - Flight Deck Officer/Aircraft Handler/ Mini-Boss
July 1989 - Jan 1990 - **Armed Forces Staff College** - Student
Jan 1990 - Feb 1992 - **US Space Command** - Aide to Deputy US Space
Feb 1992 - Dec 1993 - **HC-11 Gunbearers** - Department Head
USS TARAWA, LHA-5 OIC First H-46 Amphibious Detachment
USS CONSTELLATION, CV-64 - OIC Cruise Round the Horn from Norfolk to San Diego
Dec 1993 - Jul 1994 - **HC-3** - Pac Rats - H-46 FRS Executive Officer
Jul 1994 - Jun 1995 - **CNAP** - Air Operations Officer
Jun 1995 - Dec 1995 - **COMPHIBRON Seven/US New Orleans, LPH-7** - J-5 Plans Officer
Jun 1996 - Sep 1998 - **HC-11** Gunbearers - Executive/Commanding Officer
Sep 1998 - Dec 1999 - **Commander Helicopter Tactical Wing Pacific** - Chief Staff Officer
Apr 2000 - Jun 2001 - **HC-3** - H-46 Commanding Officer
July 2001 - July 2002 - **USS JOHN C. STENNIS, CVN-74** - Navigator
Mar 2003 - Aug 2006 - **USS PELELIU, LHA-5** - Executive/Commanding Officer
Oct 2006 - Apr 2006 - **Pentagon** - Executive Assistant (EA) to the Director of the Navy Staff
Jan 2009 - May 2010 - **MH-60 R/S Fleet Introduction Team**
May 2010 - **Retired from US Navy**
Sep 2010 - Oct 2013 - **Booz Allen Hamilton**
Apr 2014 - May 2019 - **Naval Helicopter Association** - Executive Director
Apr 2014 - Oct 2025 - **Naval Helicopter Association Historical Society** - President/CEO

Summary of Significant Career Events

1993 Conducted Successful Night Rescue of F-14D Tomcat Crew LT Jeff Jacober, USN and LT Rich Gourley, USN from VF-11

Nominated as Naval Aide to the President of the United States

Selected as Aide to the Deputy US Space Command Colorado Springs, CO

HC-11 XO/CO

- OIC of first H-46D Amphibious SAR detachment replacing the aging UH-1N Huey in support of the Amphibious Ready Group (ARG).
- Formulated and carried out the initial planning, development and testing of night vision devices resulting in greatly improved ARG SAR capability.
- First detachment to successfully operate conducting night overwater aided SAR operations validating the use and need for night vision goggles.

- His contributions to the Amphibious SAR Mission have had a lasting impact on the squadron, HC Community and Tactical Commanders. Instituted landmark changes and improvements to the evolution of the Amphibious SAR Mission from its inception.
- West Coast nominee and runner-up for the James B. Stockdale Award for Inspirational Leadership.
- Graduate of the Naval War College while also earning a Master's Degree in Management from Webster University.
- As Commanding Officer of HC-11 won the Battle E and runner up for CNAP CNO Safety Award.
- Developed and completed the implementation training and deployment of the first NVD SPECWAR support capable detachment, laying the groundwork for providing coordinated SPECOP's helicopter Fleet Support capabilities of the future.

HC-3 - Commanding Officer

- As FRS Commanding Officer, the squadron was awarded the CNO's Theodore J. Ellison Award for operational and production excellence two years in a row.
- Selected as number one Fleet Readiness Squadron and number one of 15 FRS' in the Navy (both fixed and rotary wing).
- CNO personally presented this award as this accomplishment was achieved despite overall 80% FRS manning (lowest FRS manning in the fleet), flying 35 plus year old aircraft while transitioning the squadron to the MH-60S helicopter.
- Half the squadron was manned with H-60 maintainers and half with H-46 maintainers in anticipation of an on-time delivery of the MH-60S aircraft which was delayed for one year due to manufacturing problems.
- Remarkably the transition was accomplished without incident or working the squadron a single weekend in over two years.
- Won the 1999 CNO Safety Award Winner.
- Coordinated and developed the first night vision device (NVD) syllabus for the Navy H-46/MH-60S FRS.

Commander Helicopter Tactical Wing Pacific COS and MH-60R/S FIT OIC

- Key architect and contributor to executing the Helicopter Master Plan which included establishing commonality of aircraft and reduction from 8 aircraft to 2 (H-60 and H-53).
- Developed FRS ROC/POE for transition from H-46D to MH-60S and overarching plan to converge existing legacy H60 platform training with that of the H60R/S.
- Integration and certification of MH-60R/S and MQ-8B aircraft on the Freedom and Independence Class Littoral Combat Ships.
- Established the Helicopter Combat Support Community (HC) Fleet Weapons and Tactics Schools. Graduated the first HC Special Warfare Tactical Instructor (SWTI).
- Fleet Experiment: Round-the-Clock, On-Demand/Just in Time Ordnance Delivery (JITOD) Provided Vision, Critical Leadership, Refined Development, Support and Testing for the Just-in-time Ordnance Delivery Concept which can extend the carrier battle group's ability to conduct strike sorties.
- Recipient of CINCPACFLT Stan Arthur Award for Logistics Excellence.
- Provided key leadership and expertise to strengthen the helicopter community NVD program.

John C. Stennis, CVN-74 - Ship's Navigator

- CDO Underway
- Weapons Release Authority
- Conning Alongside Safety Officer
- CDO In Port
- Senior Watch Officer
- Ceremonial OOD
- As CDO Underway... coordinated the successful recovery of a F-14D crew
- 117 days of Combat Operations in support of Operations NOBLE EAGLE and ENDURING FREEDOM

USS PELELIU (LHA-5) - XO/CO

- CNSF (2005) Battle Efficiency (E) Award
- Unit Tactics Award
- Golden Anchor Award
- Admiral Flatley (Ship Aviation Safety) Award
- SECNAV Energy Conservation Award
- CNSF Self-Sufficient Ship

Deputy Director of the Navy Staff

- Executive Assistant (EA) to the Director of the Navy Staff (OPNAV DNS)
- Selected as SECDEF Navy special project officer to coordinate the details for the establishment of the new Combatant Command in Africa/AFRICOM.
- Updated and improved the OPNAV staff including architecting a complete staff reorganization, total staff conversion to National Security Personnel System (NSPS).
- Coordinated a Medal of Honor Ceremony for LT Michael Murphy USN.
- Provided oversight of the overall Enterprise Management Process.
- Designed and implemented a revised enterprise architecture and executed a full reorganization and restructuring of the OPNAV Staff.

Executive Director Naval Helicopter Association (NHA) - April 2014 - Dec 2019 - 5 Years

- Improved Overall Finances from \$500K to \$1.2M, Membership from 1.8K to over 3K
- Recognized with Lifelong Service to NHA Award
- President and CEO of NHA Historical Society, Inc. (NHAHS) - 10 Years
- Lifetime Member of NHA #48
- Trustee of the Naval Helicopter Association (NHA) - 1998/27 Years
- Project Manager for CDR Clyde E. Lassen, USN (Ret.) Medal of Honor Memorial
Four Years to place a helicopter on stanchion at Naval Base Coronado/NAS North Island
- NHA Chairman's Award for completing the Lassen Project

Awards:

- 3 Legion of Merit Medals
- 1 Defense Meritorious Service Medal
- 7 Meritorious Service Medals
- 5 Navy Commendation Medals
- 2 Navy Achievement Medals
- 1 Navy Community Voluntary Service Medal

Associations/Members/Boards:

- Lifetime Member of Naval Helicopter Association (LTM/NHA)
- Member of Tailhook Association (THA)
- Member of the Association of Naval Aviation (ANA)
- Member of the Coronado Historical Society (CHA)
- Member of the Coronado VFW Post 2422
- Member of American Legion Post 416 of Encinitas
- Member of USS Midway Museum
 - Responsible for Readyroom Two (Helo Readyroom) and Midway Helicopter Exhibit
- Member of Mt. Soledad National Veterans Memorial
- Lifetime Member of Naval Academy Alumni Association (USNAAA)
- Life Member of the Military Officers Association of America [MOAA]
- USNA 1980 Class Council Member and Webmaster

Personal:

Resides in San Diego, CA. Married to former Mary Hoffman also of Elmira, NY (rival high school sweethearts). Two daughters and one son and seven grandchildren.

If I had to single out three (3) significant accomplishments of my aviation career they would be:

1. Flying a total of 5,048 accident-free flight hours with a significant number of these hours accumulated while instructing our next generation of helicopter pilots at Whiting Field in Milton, Florida, at sea, at night, on and off NVG's. Instructing basic skills and instrument procedures always kept me on my toes and there is nothing more fulfilling than seeing students succeed and earn their Wings of Gold.
2. Performed night SAR of F-14D aircrew in H-46D helicopter off the coast of Southern CA. Successfully recovered two (2) man overboard rescues along with a F-14 Rescue while CDO underway after a bolter on John C. Stennis, CVN-74.
3. Procured, engineered, fund raised and restored a HH-60F helicopter in addition to completing all the administrative requirements to include a Dedication Ceremony to mount and gift the CDR Clyde E. Lassen, USN (Ret.) Medal of Honor Memorial Helicopter on a Stanchion across the street from the VADM James B. Stockdale A-4 Skyhawk at the Naval Base Coronado/Naval Air Station North Island front gate. Coordinated another Dedication Ceremony and Fly Over at the local Mt. Soledad National Veterans Memorial.

I hereby nominate CAPTAIN William S. Personius, USN (Ret.) for Membership in The Early and Pioneer Naval Aviators Association-The Golden Eagles:

(Write a short endorsement of the nominee, clearly and succinctly describing your first-hand experience or knowledge of the nominee's flying skills, as well as the leadership and innovative aviation accomplishments that qualify him/her to be a Golden Eagle).

Michael O'Connor, USN (Ret.)

Golden Eagle Sponsor Date: 2 February 2026

I hereby second the nomination of CAPTAIN Wiliam S. "Bill" Personius, USN (Ret.) for Membership in The Early and Pioneer Naval Aviators Association-The Golden Eagles:

(Write a short endorsement of the nominee, clearly and succinctly describing your first-hand experience or knowledge of the nominee's flying skills, as well as the leadership and innovative aviation accomplishments that qualify him/her to be a Golden Eagle).

CAPT Gene Pellerin, USN (Ret.)

Golden Eagle Co-Sponsor Date: 2 February 2026

Delete the following Checklist before your submission.

GOLDEN EAGLE's NOMINATION CHECKLIST

1 May 2023

1. Sponsor/Co-Sponsor nomination eligibility (Bylaws Art VIII, Sect. 1)

- Two years as a Regular Member, (Co-Sponsor 1 year) and have attended one Reunion.
- Limit Two (2) Nominations per year as Sponsor (no limit on Co-Sponsor).
- Emeritus Members are not eligible to submit a nomination.

2. Review Qualifications Necessary to be Golden Eagle (Bylaws Art II, Sect 1.a)

- Current qualifications, are particularly applicable in current time frame (Art II, Sect 1.a.2)
- Emphasis on cockpit performance, superior flying skills, and dedication to flying.

3. Nomination is made by the Sponsor, and is NOT an Application by Nominee

- The **Sponsor** obtains the information and writes the nomination.
- Sponsor may request personal data, flight hours, combat tours, commands, and awards from the nominee.
- Sponsor may request a bullet list of Individual Flying Skills, Aviation Leadership, and Innovative Aviation Accomplishments from the nominee if desired. **Sponsor should edit the list into their own words and delete his/her input entirely from the final nomination.**
- Lengthy Bios, commendatory letters, etc., are unnecessary.

4. Nomination Form Format

- Word processing of an electronic version of the Nom Form is encouraged.
- Use as much space as needed in each section, but maintain the format.

5. Brief Summary of Qualifications for Membership Section

- Brief, factual, understandable comments.
- Bullet style or prose: whatever suits you is acceptable.
- Submit via email, attaching the nomination as a Word document.

6. MSC Members Need a “word picture” of the nominee

- Keep in mind, that MSC members may not know nominee.
- Need personal characteristics to make an informed judgment.
- Write the nomination as you would like to read it if you were on the MSC.

7. Sponsor Nominations and Co-Sponsor Endorsements

- It's what you write, not who you are.
- Write solid, meaningful comments on aeronautical ability and accomplishments.

8. Review of Nomination

- Review your nomination over a few days and make improvements and corrections.
- It takes time, but a well thought out, well written nomination is worth the extra effort.

9. Assistance/questions

- I am available to answer questions or assist with the nominations.
- Nomination Forms are available from me or from the Golden Eagles website.

10. Nomination Submission

- Submit your nomination to the MSC Secretary, before the date that will be published yearly. After that date, the nomination goes into next year's register.
- E-mail submissions are encouraged. I will send a confirmation receipt.

RADM Donald A. Weiss, USN (Ret)

MSC Secretary d.a.weiss@att.net