

# MEMORIES OF A DEPLOYMENT

USS FORRESTAL AND CARRIER AIR WING 6 DURING 1988

BY CHARLES H. BOGART

*Forrestal* at speed as she prepares to launch six F-14 Tomcats. Two Tomcats are positioned on the forward catapults and two other Tomcats sit behind the blast shields. Two more Tomcats prepare to launch from the angle deck catapults. The steam catapults accelerate the Tomcat to 180-mph in just 300 feet while applying a 4G force to the crew. Spotted around her deck are more Tomcats plus Corsair IIs, Intruders, Prowlers, and Vikings. HS-15 Sea King helicopter is aloft ready to rescue the crew of any aircraft that ditches.



*Forrestal's* ship insignia contained the silhouette of James Forrestal the first Secretary of Defense for whom she was named. The ship's motto "First in Defense" is a play on Forrestal being the first Secretary of Defense.



Dramatic painting done by Arthur Beaumont in 1968 depicting USS *Forrestal* and USS *Okanogan* (APA-220).

In 1952, the US Navy laid the keel of its first super carrier, the conventional-powered USS *Forrestal* (CVA-59). Built by Newport News Shipyard, *Forrestal* was launched in December 1954 and commissioned on 1 October 1955 at Norfolk, Virginia. *Forrestal* was the first US carrier to be built with an angled deck and four catapults, thus allowing landings and launchings to take place simultaneously. She also had no deck elevator, having instead four deck edge elevators.

*Forrestal* made her first overseas deployment in 1955 when she joined the 6th Fleet in the Mediterranean. Between 1955 and 1983, *Forrestal* would make 17 overseas deployments serving with the 6th Fleet and with the 7th Fleet off the coast of Vietnam. Between 1983 and 1985, she was at the Philadelphia Navy Yard undergoing a Service Life Extension Program (SLEP)