

BIOGRAPHY OF REAR ADMIRAL MORTON E. TOOLE USN (ret) (nickname "Jim")

Admiral Morton Egner ("Jim") Toole was born on February 14, 1937 at Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, as his father attended the Army Command and Staff School, the late Colonel, USA, and Mrs. Leslie E. Toole of Belmont, California. His father was U.S. Army Officer 1916-1953 who served on Mexican Border against Pancho Villa, 43rd Infantry during World War I, Adak Alaska during World War II, and was Military Governor of Shikoku Japan during the Korean War (in those days one could serve on active duty until age 60). Admiral Toole's older brother was born at Ft Benning, Georgia when his father was attending the Infantry School; he received a Marine Corps commission from NROTC at Stanford, and served during the Korean War.

Morton Toole graduated from high school in Menlo Park, California and was determined to serve in a different service, viz. the Navy. Entering college he was too young at 16 to be eligible for a regular Navy scholarship and joined as a Reservist with the NROTC at Stanford University. When he became 17, he was selected for the Regular NROTC, which would lead to a regular commission upon graduation, but was only eligible for a vacancy in that program at UCLA. He transferred to UCLA and majored in American History to ensure an in-depth knowledge about the country he was dedicated to serve. At 19 years of age, "Jim" Toole was the President of his fraternity, Delta Tau Delta, at UCLA where he graduated in 1957 with a degree in American History; he was commissioned from the regular NROTC program at age 20. He was sworn in by the then Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Arleigh A. Burke, and was determined to follow in Burke's inspiration as a "destroyer man." He was to spend 30 years on active duty, twenty of those years at sea or overseas, with ten deployments on nine afloat commands, five of which he commanded.

From June 1957 to September 1960, he served aboard USS DUNCAN (DDR-874) in San Diego as First Lieutenant, fleeting-up the next year to ASW Officer, and during his third year, fleeting up to being a Department Head as Weapons Officer. He made three Seventh Fleet deployments with repeated Taiwan Straits Patrols: the U.S. Seventh Fleet had been placed in the "Formosa Straits" by President Truman to prevent a continued war between Communist China on the mainland and Nationalist China on Taiwan. He married Judith Robbins in 1958, the daughter of the Dean of the UCLA Business School.

After attending the Navy's first Missile Officer's class at Dam Neck Virginia, he joined the pre-commissioning crew of USS LYNDE MCCORMICK (DDG-8) at Bay City, Michigan in December 1960. Which was subsequently commissioned in Boston, Massachusetts, and then transited the Panama Canal to its homeport in San Diego. LTJG Toole served three years on that new-class ship out of San Diego as Missile Officer and then fleeting-up to Department Head as Weapons Officer. The ship deployed to the Seventh Fleet and was the first ship to fire a surface-to-air SM-1 TARTAR missile at a surface target, and was the first test ship for the STEAM system of replenishment at sea of missiles; during the test program the system sustained a

system breakdown: Lieutenant Toole took charge of the system control to ensure no one got injured and was subsequently awarded the Navy Commendation for his action. After over six years at sea on destroyers, he passed the then COMCRUDESPAC and BUPERS examinations and was certified as "Qualified for Command of Destroyers."

From January 1964 to January 1966, Lieutenant Toole was at BUPERS in Washington DC at the old Navy Annex (since destroyed) as the curriculum developer and controller of all officer and enlisted training programs for TARTAR surface missile systems equipment and weapon systems courses. Since he knew his country's history, he, as a naval officer representing that country, wanted a better understanding of our efforts in international relations. Therefore, simultaneously on his own at night, he attended American University and was awarded a Master's Degree in International Relations in 1966: he finished writing his Master's Thesis in the Saigon Vietnam library while awaiting the arrival of his river patrol boats.

From April 1966 to April 1967 Lieutenant Commander Toole was the first Commander of River Division 53 and Commander Task Unit 116.1.3 in Vietnam, leading the first PBR's (River Patrol Boats) up the Mekong River to operate out of My Tho and Vinh Long during the Vietnam War. He was responsible for continuous patrolling of 300 miles of the Mekong River's branches: Co Chien, Ham Luong, and My Tho. These operations were extremely dangerous because the Rules of Engagement for RPB operating in the Mekong Delta and its upper reaches were that all people on the river were subject to a sunset curfew. If US Naval forces found people on the river after curfew, they were required to approach and ask for identification. Sometimes the people were fishermen – but sometimes the people were Viet Cong, who fired on US Naval personnel. Lieutenant Commander Toole was worried for the safety of his men.

At the end of his tour in country, the enemy activity in his area caused him to be given tactical command of 54 of the 80 PBR's in the entire Mekong Delta in Operation GAME WARDEN. The Task Force earned the Presidential Unit Citation. One of his Boat Captains was BM1 James E. Williams, the most decorated enlisted man in U.S. Navy history.

During the monsoon rains of October 1966, the Viet Cong attempted to retreat from the Vietnamese Plain of Reeds into Cambodia; LCDR Toole lead an eight PBR operation 150 miles to Muc Hoa near the border and operated in Viet Cong flooded base camps, destroying previously inaccessible enemy entrenchments and support facilities. This operation found his crews from 5-18 October on thirty-one foot fiberglass boats without any sanitary, sleeping or cooking facilities and was three years before the U.S. Navy had, under VADM Zumwalt, sufficient resources to operate routinely in the canals of the Plain of Reeds. At one point along the Vietnam-Cambodia border, his patrol was attacked by a company-sized enemy unit and after a subsequent firefight, he made the dubious claim of conducting the first U.S. Navy shore bombardment of Cambodia. The flood operations included operations with

Vietnamese Irregular Forces and resulted in 129 enemy killed in action, 52 enemy wounded in action, 10 enemy captured, 194 enemy huts and bunkers destroyed, and miscellaneous weapons, mines, and documents captured. LCDR Toole was awarded the Bronze Star Medal with "Combat V" and the Vietnamese Army awarded him the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Gold Star (Corps Level).

During his tour in Vietnam, Lieutenant Commander Toole participated in 58 patrols, 18 of which were under fire. For his service in the Mekong Delta, he was awarded the Legion of Merit with Combat "V" and earned the U.S. Presidential Unit Citation, Vietnamese Meritorious Unit Commendation for Gallantry with Palm, and Vietnamese Unit Commendation for Civil Action with Palm.

From June 1967 to August 1968, Lieutenant Commander Toole was Executive Officer aboard USS HENRY B. WILSON (DDG-7). The ship deployed to the Seventh Fleet in February 1968 participating in 5" gunfire support and shore bombardment from the Cau Mau peninsula to the Demilitarized Zone during the Tet Offensive in South Vietnam, and, thereafter, throughout North Vietnam. In one bombardment exchange, HENRY B. WILSON was struck by a North Vietnamese shore battery while being straddled by a forty-four round near-miss enemy artillery barrage. During the strikes on North Vietnam, Lieutenant Command Toole was the Tactical Action Officer in CIC directing all action. During the 198 day deployment, the ship had 101 underway replenishments, steamed 47,000 miles, and fired 13,445 rounds of 5" projectiles against 1,358 enemy targets, causing the following destruction: 83 enemy confirmed killed-in-action; 170 enemy structures damaged and 102 enemy structures destroyed; 4 enemy junks or sampans sunk and five damaged; and 14 secondary explosions. The ship was awarded the Navy's Meritorious Unit Commendation. For his participation, Lieutenant Commander Toole was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V".

From October 1968 until he decommissioned her May 1970, Lieutenant Commander Toole was Commanding Officer, USS HISSEM (DER-400) in Pearl Harbor, and deployed to Seventh Fleet in November 1968 participating in counter-infiltration patrols in Operation MARKET TIME off the Vietnamese coast, from January to March 1969 in IV Corps area, and April-May 1969 in I Corps area, seeking gun-runners from North Vietnam and providing direct gunfire support for U.S. and Vietnamese Army units. HISSEM's surveillance patrols detected 649 contacts and either boarded or close-aboard inspected 454 boats, sampans, junks, and ships. HISSEM's 3" gun system had no computer assistance for gunfire support, but on 21 April 1969 the 4th company, 3rd Battalion 4th Regiment of the Second ARVN Division had an operation halted by an entrenched enemy and called for assistance. HISSEM provided 45 minutes of direct gunfire resulting in four enemy killed, two enemy fortified structures destroyed and eight enemy bunkers damaged. In May 1969, gunfire support was provided for the U.S. Americal Division resulting in seven enemy bunkers destroyed, seven enemy military structures destroyed and one second explosion. When not in MARKET TIME patrols, the ship did repeated Taiwan Straits patrol in December 1968, February and May 1969. HISSEM earned the Squadron

Battle Efficiency "E". Lieutenant Commander Toole earned the Navy Achievement Medal with Combat "V".

After earning seven campaign stars in the Vietnam War, Commander Toole served in Washington, DC successively from July 1970 until September 1973: first, until January 1971 as Director Integrated Logistics Support in the Surface Missile Systems Project Office at the Naval Ordnance Systems Command in Washington, DC at the Munitions Building (since destroyed); then NAVORD Branch Head for Ships Characteristics and NAVORD contact for the development of FFG-7 and PHM in Crystal City, VA; and then on 1 November 1971 was transferred to the CNO's Priorities Analysis Group in the Pentagon.

From March 1973 to September 1974, Commander Toole was Commanding Officer, USS PREBLE (DLG-15) homeported in Pearl Harbor. During his tour, PREBLE was part of the aircraft carrier (USS ORISKANY CVA- 19) Battle Group to operate in the Northern Arabian Sea of the Indian Ocean during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, and earned a Battle Efficiency "E".

From October 1974 until September 1976, Captain Toole was Head, Weapons Systems Section in Research Development for Surface Warfare in OPNAV-98 developing AEGIS, RAM, CIWS, and 8" Major Caliber Lightweight Gun. After attending the CNO Senior Officers Ship Material Readiness Course at Idaho Falls, Idaho, he relieved as Commanding Officer, USS WILLIAM H. STANDLEY (CG-32) on 14 March 1977 while at sea in the Mediterranean. During his tour, WILLIAM H. STANDLEY completed a six months deployment to the Sixth Fleet, transited the Panama Canal from her homeport of Charleston, underwent an 11 month overhaul at Puget Sound Naval Shipyard, had three homeports and yet earned the Silver Anchor Award for retention.

Captain Toole was Chief of Staff to Commander Carrier Group FOUR from June 1979 until April 1981 for three Rear Admirals (Warwick, Easterling, Fuller), and was embarked in USS DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (CVN-69) during the 1980 Iranian Hostage crisis in the Indian Ocean for an eight month seven day deployment that involved being at sea eight months, two days. The Battle Group earned the Navy Unit Citation and the Navy Expeditionary Service Medal. Captain Toole was awarded a second Legion of Merit.

Captain Toole was selected for promotion to Rear Admiral in 1981 at age 43, and became CINCPACFLT Deputy Chief of Staff for Management and Fleet Inspector General until December 1983. Rear Admiral Toole was awarded his third Legion of Merit. He was assigned as Commander Service Group TWO in Norfolk from 24 February 1984 until 30 May 1986, where he earned his fourth Legion of Merit.

Rear Admiral Toole's final assignment, from June 1986 to the spring of 1987 was Chief of Staff simultaneously to two Joint Commands at Orlando, Florida: Joint Deployment Agency and U.S. Readiness Command. Both commands were

discontinued in the spring of 1987: with Joint Deployment Agency absorbed by Transportation Command and Readiness Command morphed into Special Operations Command. Rear Admiral Toole's final award was a Form-214 handed to him by a Yeoman Second Class with orders to the retired list on 1 July 1987 at age 50.

Rear Admiral Toole has a daughter from first marriage, Laura Toole Torres and two grandchildren (Max and Kendal Torres); his first wife was deceased on October 4, 2021.

In June 1987, Rear Admiral Toole married Beverly June Shiel and raised her twin daughters, Angela and Brandy Shiel. After Angela came down with bone cancer, he also raised Angela's two infant children (Brandon and Bridget). He is a member of the Naval Order of the United States, the Surface Warfare Association, the Naval Historical Foundation, and the U.S. Naval Institute.

Rear Admiral Toole earned the Legion of Merit with Combat V and three gold stars, the Bronze Star Medal with Combat V, the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat V and one gold star, the Navy Achievement Medal with Combat V, the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Gold Star, Combat Action Ribbon, Presidential Unit Citation, Navy Unit Citation, Meritorious Unit Commendation, three awards of Battle Efficiency E, Navy Expeditionary Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Expeditionary Service Medal with two stars (Quemoy/Matsu and Formosa Straits), Vietnam Service Medal with seven campaign stars, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon with nine stars, Vietnamese Civil Support ribbon with Palm, Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry Unit ribbon with Palm, Vietnamese Service Medal, and USN River Patrol Device.