



# Ronald Reagan Crew Welcomes Ace

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Distinguished visitors (DVs) are a common occurrence aboard Ronald Reagan and Sailors have grown accustomed to welcoming individuals into their workspaces and showing off what they do. Yesterday the men and women aboard Ronald Reagan and Carrier Air Wing (CVW) 14 greeted a DV that has more experience in naval aviation than the average visitor.

William "Irish" Driscoll arrived on board via an arrested landing as a passenger in a C-2 Greyhound, assigned to the "Providers" of Fleet Logistics Combat Support Squadron (VRC) 30. It was not his first, nor even his 500th "trap."

Driscoll began his career as a Naval Flight Officer in 1970, and served as a Radar Intercept Officer (RIO) in an F-4 Phantom II with pilot "Duke" Cunning-

ham. Driscoll and Cunningham became household names in naval aviation on May 10, 1972. Returning from a successful bombing mission, they encountered a group of North Vietnamese MiG-17s. **Shooting down three of the sixteen MiGs earned Driscoll the Navy Cross and during the course of the war he was also awarded two Silver Stars, a Purple Heart, 10 Air Medals and was nominated for the Medal of Honor.**

"I never considered us better than anyone else," said Driscoll, during a tour of Reagan's library. "We were just well-trained, lucky and in the right place at the right time."

No longer in active duty, Driscoll still devotes his time to sharing his experience with Navy pilots to prepare them for what they may face in a combat

dogfight situation. Twice a year he travels to Fallon, Nev., to the Naval Strike and Air Warfare Center (NSAWC), also known as "Top Gun," to give a lecture to the graduating class. He also makes various stops around the fleet to meet with air wings and squadrons getting ready to deploy.

**"I first met him in 1993 at Naval Fighter Weapons School (the former name of Top Gun)," said Cmdr. Dave "Beaker" Lobdell, commanding officer of Strike Fighter Squadron (VFA) 25, the "Fist of the Fleet." "He gave a lecture on the physical aspects of combat. He does a phenomenal job of telling you what's going to happen, and how you're going to react; and he was right on all accounts."**

Driscoll's visit aboard Reagan, however, was not for train-

ing. He came to the ship, along with other distinguished visitors to see today's Navy in action. During their time on board, they were shown operations from the flight deck all the way to the ship's store.

"It's a great thing for patriotic American citizens to see what goes on in our Navy," said Driscoll. "I have always had the highest respect for the crew. I'm in awe of their professionalism, always have been."

During his tour of the ship, Driscoll still found time to visit one of the squadron ready rooms and mentor some of the pilots, even if it wasn't a formal lecture. For the men and women who got the chance to talk with him, it was enough.

**"The man has seen it all," said Lobdell, "and is a legend in naval aviation."**