

## **Bill Zidbeck chronology**

William E. Zidbeck was born on 7 June 1932 in Ancon, Canal Zone, Panama. His father was George Zidbeck who was born 1903 in Brooklyn, NY. His grandfather was Gustav Zidbeck who was born in Finland in 1878 and immigrated to the U. S. in 1895. Gustav and his wife Annie were living in Brooklyn in 1903 when George was born. Gustav was an machinist who moved to Panama in 1907 and helped to build the Panama Canal as an engineering supervisor. He and his family lived in the Canal Zone for 30 years, returning in 1940 to live in Long Beach CA until his death in 1944.

Bill Zidbeck was 12 years old when his family moved to Corona CA. He was valedictorian of his class at Corona Senior High School. He attended Stanford University on a NROTC scholarship and graduated in 1954 with a degree in biology. At Stanford he met his wife, Jo Ann "Jody" Hill of Alhambra, and they were married June 13, 1954 in Stanford's Memorial Church.

Bill was commissioned an ensign in the Navy on June 12, 1954 and assigned to Naval Aviation Schools Command at NAS Pensacola FL.

In October 1955 he finished his flight training at NAS Hutchinson, Kansas, and received his "Wings of Gold" as a Naval aviator. No allotments in Neptune P2V squadron were available at that time, so Bill was sent to Glynnco, Georgia for lighter-than-airship training.

In 1956-57 he served in airship squadron ZP-4 at Elizabeth City, NC. (Weeksville airfield). He qualified as Aircraft Commander in the ZP2G airship.

In 1958-59 he served in airship squadron ZW-1 at Lakehurst, NJ, and subsequently served as the Communications Officer on the staff of Fleet Airship Wing ONE. However, the Navy ended its support of airships at Lakehurst Naval Air Station by 1961.

In 1960 Captain Zidbeck reported to the University of Southern California as Assistant Professor of Naval Science in the NROTC Program.

"Lt. William Zidbeck, USN, and Mrs. Zidbeck have returned to their home in Alhambra after spending a month in San Diego where he has been working on summer cruises of West Coast university NROTC midshipmen. Lt. Zidbeck and his wife spent his week's leave in the San Bernardino Mountains at Lake Arrowhead, In September he returns to USC where he is an instructor with the NROTC Unit. (Pasadena Independent, Aug. 16 1962)

"Bill was an NROTC Instructor at USC and finished his 3 year tour in 1963, with orders to a helicopter squadron in Imperial Beach, California. Jody then taught third grade for two years at Emory Elementary School in Imperial Beach. In the summer of 1965, Jody and Bill adopted their son, William Scott, and Jody became a full time mother." (Jody's obituary)

Following the USC NROTC assignment, he qualified as a helicopter pilot in Ellyson Field, Pensacola FL. After HS-10 replacement pilot training, he went to Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron SIX in 1964 as Administrative and subsequently Maintenance Officer.

This squadron, HS-6, embarked in 1964 and in 1966 on the USS KEARSARGE for two Western Pacific deployments into the South China Sea.

In 1966, "Four Ream Field fliers yesterday escaped injury when their Sea King helicopter made a forced landing two miles west of Point Loma. Minutes later the four had to scramble to safety when their downed craft flooded with water and flipped over as the pilot was attempting to taxi to North Island Naval Air Station. All four men were picked up by a whale boat from the destroyer Black and were taken to North Island. The crewmen, all attached to HS-6 squadron at Ream, were identified as: Lt. Cmdr. William E. Zidbeck, 33, the pilot, of 1772 Haley St., Imperial Beach. Lt. Raymond M. Carlton, 25, co-pilot, of 237 Carnation Ave., Imperial Beach. John R. Kitts, 23, a sonar technician third class of Ream Field. Gary W. Smith, a sonar technician third class of 343 Palm Ave., Imperial Beach. The SH-3 helicopter flooded after being hit by a wave, but it did not sink because of its flotation gear, Zidbeck said later. Zidbeck said the cause of the accident is under investigation, but he suspected an engine had failed. He said they were participating in a routine Navy exercise and were to have flown to the aircraft carrier KEARSARGE at the end of the exercise. They will take another helicopter to the carrier today, he said. The accident occurred at 10:50 a.m. (San Diego Union, Apr. 13, 1966)

"Mrs. William Zidbeck of Imperial Beach, a past president of the officers wives club of HS-6 has left the South Bay area. First stop for her and year-old Scott, was a brief family vacation in Hawaii. Her husband, who sailed to Hawaii, on the KEARSARGE with his squadron, will be detached there for duty in Florida. After a rest and fun fling the couple will fly back to California and then make tracks for his new duty station in Florida. (Chula Vista Star-News, June 23, 1966)

His next tour of duty was as Replacement Air Group Instructor at Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron ONE, NAS Key West, Florida, and was promoted to Captain.

In 1968 Captain Zidbeck was Executive Officer of Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron NINE aboard USS ESSEX on a North Atlantic Deployment.

In 1969, he attended the senior course at the Naval War College and graduated with distinction.

During his career he also attended the Graduate School of International Relations at the University of Southern California and was awarded a Masters Degree in 1969.

In 1970 he was the Executive Officer of Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron FIVE aboard the USS WASP.

He assumed command of HS-5 in Hamburg, Germany. During Captain Zidbeck's tenure of command, 1970-1971, HS-5 deployed into the North Atlantic and the Mediterranean and was the recipient of the Battle "E", Arnold J. Isbell Trophy for Excellence in airborne ASW operations and the Navy Unit Commendation. His next tour of duty was as "the last ongoing" navigator of the USS WASP.

Following this tour he reported to the Joint Chiefs of Staff, serving in the Studies, Analysis, and Gaming Agency (SAGA) for Politico-Military Affairs from January 1973 to 1975.

He assumed command of the US, Naval Air Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba from 1977-1979. NAS Guantanamo was the first recipient of the Silver Eagle Award for the best retention program in the U.S. Naval Forces, Atlantic.

Captain Zidbeck next reported to the Chief of Naval Operations where he served as Head of the Europe and NATO Plans and Policy Branch.

In 1982 he and his wife moved to Coronado. His last tour of duty was as Commanding Officer of Naval Education, Training and Support, Pacific.

In 1984 he retired from the Navy and moved to IB.

Taught science at Castle Park HS 1985-88

1987 - Optimist Club - "Established in 1987, former Navy helicopter pilot instructor Bill Zidbeck helped found the international organization's IB branch after extensive involvement with the Coronado Optimist Club."

2001 - Friends of the Imperial Beach Branch Library incorporated, Bill Zidbeck is first president.

On June 1, 2018, Bill Zidbeck received a District Champion award from the South Bay Union School District.