

## Birthday Flight

The mission was supposed to be a routine training flight. That it fell on the pilot's birthday was a mere coincidence. It turned out to be anything but routine.

Donald Anthony Callia of Inman was an electrical engineering major and a member of the Class of 1960. He was a member of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers and Institute for Radio Engineers.

January of 1963 found Navy Lieutenant (JG) Callia at Oceana Naval Air Station at Virginia Beach, Virginia. He was assigned to the 101<sup>st</sup> Fighter Squadron, the Atlantic Fleet's readiness squadron. The 101<sup>st</sup> trained air crews and aircraft maintainers on the F4 Phantom, the Navy's versatile, new all-purpose fighter.

On January 16, 1963, Callia's twenty-fifth birthday, he was assigned to an evening training mission, flying in an F4B fighter as the aerial observer. As such, Callia's duties would have been to operate and monitor the aircraft's reconnaissance systems. About ten miles off the coast of Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina, Callia's aircraft crashed into the sea. Although the airplane's wreckage was located, Callia's body was not recovered.



Callia was survived by his wife, Marie, and his parents. He is memorialized at Arlington National Cemetery.

