



**Charles H. Pitman, LTGEN, USMC (Ret.)**  
 "Chuck"

Date of Designation: 24 August 1954 NA # T-4939

Dates of Active Duty: October 1952 - August 1990

Total Flight Hours: 12,000+ in fighters, attack, recon, helicopters and special operations.

Carrier/Ship Landings: 575 Fixed wing: 70 / Helo 505

Approximate Flight Hours:

Jet: 3,500 Prop: 4,000 Helo: 4,600 VF/VA: 2,500

Combat Tours:

Vietnam: VM CJ-1, 1963 (flying EF-10's & UH-3's)  
 Dominican Republic: VM CJ-2, 1964 (flying RF-8's)  
 Vietnam: HMM-265, 1966-1968 (flying CH-46's)  
 Vietnam: H&MS 16, 1970-1971 (flying UH-1's, CH-46's, OV-10's and CH-53's)  
 Iran: Eagle Claw, 1980 (hostage rescue flying RH-53's)

Aviation Commands:

CO, H&MS-16 RVN 1970-71  
 CO, MARTD New Orleans, LA 1971-73  
 CO, Marine Aircraft Group 36, Japan 1978-79  
 CO, MATSG Pensacola, FL 1980-81  
 CG, Marine Forces, Korea 1982-84  
 AWC, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, CA 1984-85  
 CG, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, Asia-Pacific 1985-87

Combat Awards:

Silver Star  
 4 Distinguished Flying Crosses  
 Bronze Star with Combat "V"  
 Purple Heart  
 65 Air Medals  
 Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V"  
 Combat Action Ribbon



Combat Awards continued:

Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with Silver Star  
 2 Presidential Unit Citations

### **Duty Assignment Chronology**

10/52-10/53 USNR enlisted, Great Lakes.  
 11-53-06/54 Pvt/PFC, USMC Electronics.  
 06/54-08/55 NAVCAD, Pensacola , FL.  
 9/55-11/56 HMR-363, Santa Ana, CA/Bikini Atoll, PPG.  
 11/56-01/58 MCAAS Mojave, CA.  
 02/58-07/6 NATC Pensacola, FL.  
 07/61-10/62 VM CJ-3, El Toro , CA.  
 11/62-11/63 VM CJ-1, East Asia/Pacific.  
 11/63-09/64 VM CJ-2, Cherry Point, NC.  
 09/64-05/66 Aide to CG 2nd MAW, NC.  
 06/66-11/66 HMM-261, New River, NC.  
 11/66-01/68 HMM-265, Vietnam.  
 02/68-01/70 CNO, OP 05W.  
 01/70-06/70 Armed Forces Staff College.  
 07/70-02/71 CO, H&MS-16, Vietnam.  
 03/71-07/71 Bethesda Hospital, MD.  
 07/71-06/73 MARTD New Orleans.  
 06/73-06/74 Air War College, AL.  
 07/74-06/76 HQMC Aviation APP-2.  
 07/76-6/78 SECNAV OPA.  
 07/78-06/79 CO, MAG-36. Japan.  
 07/79-05/81 Special Asst CJCS.  
 05/81-05/82 CO, MATSG, Pensacola.  
 05/82-07/84 C-5 CFC/MARFOR, Korea.  
 08-84/05-85 DCG, 3rd MAW.  
 06/85-09/87 CG, 1st MAW.  
 09/87-08/90 DCS Aviation HQMC.  
 8/1/1990 Retired from active duty.

### **Summary of Significant Career Events**

Born in Chicago in 1935, he began flying at 14, enlisted in the Naval Reserve in 1952 and subsequently the Marine

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Corps in 1953. In 1954, he entered Naval flight training in Pensacola as a NAVCAD and received his wings and commission as a 2ndLt in August 1955, while he was still 19.

In his first Fleet assignment, HMR 363 flying H-19's (HRS-1's), he deployed to the Pacific Proving Grounds (Bikini Atoll) aboard the USS *Badoeng Strait* (CVE-116). During the first Hydrogen Bomb detonation, he was selected to fly to ground zero to test the radiation. During his seven months on station in 1956, he observed 13 nuclear blasts and flew over 500 hours in support of the Atomic Energy Commission.

Returning to the States, he transferred to MCAAS Mojave as rescue pilot, airfield operations officer, Provost Marshal and brig officer, flying HRS's, HUP's, HOK's, T-28's, C-45's and C-117's.

From there, in 1958, he returned to Pensacola for jet transition, became an instrument flight instructor and later attended Naval Aviation Photo Reconnaissance School. As a result of that, he did 3 tours in Marine reconnaissance squadrons in the US and Far East flying RF-8's and EF-10's. During these tours (1961-64), he flew reconnaissance along the China, North Korean Russian, Vietnamese, Cuban and Dominican Republic coasts and received his first "classified" Air Medal.

In 1966, he returned to Vietnam, this time flying CH-46's with HMM-265 in Northern I Corps operating out of Danang, Phu Bai, Khe Sanh, and Dong Ha. While forced down 5 times by enemy fire, all of his aircraft were eventually recovered.

In February 1968, he returned to Washington, DC to work in OPNAV OP-05W. While there, he was able to return to Vietnam for some specialized testing, participate in classified foreign aircraft exploitation, and learn to fly gliders (Civilian). From there, he went to the Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk, VA.

After completing Staff College in 1970, he was again able to return to Vietnam. This time, he served as the Commanding Officer, H&MS 16, flying Helicopter Coordinator Airborne, MedEvac, fire support, and recon missions in UH-1's, AH-1's, CH-46's and OV-10's. Then in February 1971, while flying a CH-53A, he was shot down for the 7th and last time while participating in Operation Lam Son 719 in Laos. His helicopter was knocked out of the air by a combination of machine gun and mortar fire. At the same time he was hit with a 12.7 round breaking his leg. He was MedEvaced to Quang Tri, then, on to Danang, Okinawa and finally Bethesda. He returned to limited duty in July and was assigned as Commanding Officer, Marine Air Reserve Training Detachment, New Orleans, LA.

He spent two years in New Orleans where his command had 2 HMM squadrons (CH-46's), a Maintenance Squadron and a Staff Group. In January 1973, he flew one of his CH-46's in support of New Orleans Police Department, eliminating a sniper who had been killing people from the roof of a downtown motel.

He left New Orleans to attend Air War College in 1973. And, in 1974 went to Washington where he spent 2 years in Marine Aviation planning and 2 years in SECNAV's Office of Program Appraisal.

From there, in 1978, he went to Command Marine Aircraft Group 36 operating in the Western Pacific, Korea, the Philippines, Thailand and Australia flying 4 types of helicopters, OV-10's and KC-130's.

Returning to Washington for the 3rd time, he was assigned to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff's special staff group. There he acted as special advisor to the Chairman on the Middle East, Africa, the Atlantic Ocean area, the DoD budget, counter-terrorism, and the RDJTF. As a result of this assignment and his helicopter experience, he was assigned to participate in the Iranian Hostage Rescue training and execution in 1979-80 (flying UH1N's and RH-53D's).

Leaving Washington in June 1981, he took Command of the Marine Aviation Training Support Group in Pensacola, FL. There, he was responsible for the Marine instructors, students and staff members in Pensacola and all of the Training Command bases in Florida, Texas and Mississippi (flying T-28's, T-2's, TA-4's and T-39's).

Promoted to Brigadier General in 1982, he was assigned as C-5, US/ROK Combined Forces Command and Commander, Marine Forces Korea in Seoul, Korea. From there, in 1984, he was reassigned as Assistant Wing Commander, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing in El Toro.

Promoted to Major General in 1985, he assumed command of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing in Japan, operating in the Indian Ocean, Australia, the Philippines, Korea, Thailand and the entire Western Pacific (flying 4 types of helicopters, KC-130's, A-4's, A-6's, A-7's, F/A-18's, C-39's and C-12's).

Returning to Washington for the 4th time in 1987, he became the Marine Corps' Deputy Chief of Staff for Aviation until his retirement on 1 August 1990 as a Lieutenant General.