



William G. Knapp, Commander, USNR

Navy Helo Pilot #1

Commander William Greer Knapp was born on January 9, 1915 in Canandaigua, New York. He was the son of Walter H. and Emma L. Smith Knapp of Canandaigua, NY. He attended the University of Rochester and University of Michigan prior to entering the Navy. He began Naval service in 1940 and was commissioned Ensign, U. S. Naval Reserve and designated a Naval Aviator on June 6, 1941. His military service included World War II service in submarines and helicopter flight testing. He became the Navy's first designated helicopter pilot. After the war from 1946-1948 he became a test pilot for the Piasecki Helicopter Corporation (later a division of Boeing Aircraft.) He returned to naval service from 1948-1953 and assisted in helicopter development. His Korean War service saw him spend three years in combat helicopter rescue and supply.

He was the winner of the American Helicopter Society honorary fellowship award in 1955. He helped develop the helicopter rescue hoist, helicopter instrument flying and made the first helicopter instrument flight in 1944. Commander Knapp holds the American Theater Medal and the Naval Reserve Medal.

He married Josephine S. Hadley of Ann Arbor, Michigan on March 6, 1950. They had one daughter, Mary Jameson Knapp. Commander William G. Knapp, at the age of 49, died January 8, 1964 in Bethesda Naval Hospital, Maryland of cancer.

Chronological List of Service

10/40-8/41	NAS Anacostia and NAS Jacksonville (Flight Training).
9/41-3/42	UP-83 (Pilot).
3/42-7-42	Brooklyn Navy Hospital (Patient).
7/42-11/43	ID-3, VS-34, U.S. Coast Guard Air Station. (Pilot and Engineering Officer).
12/43-11/45	Brooklyn, New York (Pilot and engineering development of helicopters)
12/45-9/486	Inactive service. Joined Piasecki Helicopter Corporation (Chief Test Pilot).
10/48-8/51	Returned to Naval service. Assigned to BuAer (Project Officer, Helicopter Desk Officer)
9/51-3/52	HU-1 (Pilot and Acting XO, part time)
3/52-6/52	HS-2 (Executive Officer)
6/52-5/53	HS-4 (Commanding Officer)
5//53-8/53	U. S. Naval Hospital (Patient)
9-53-?	BuAer (PC Division)