



John P. Condon, Major General, USMC

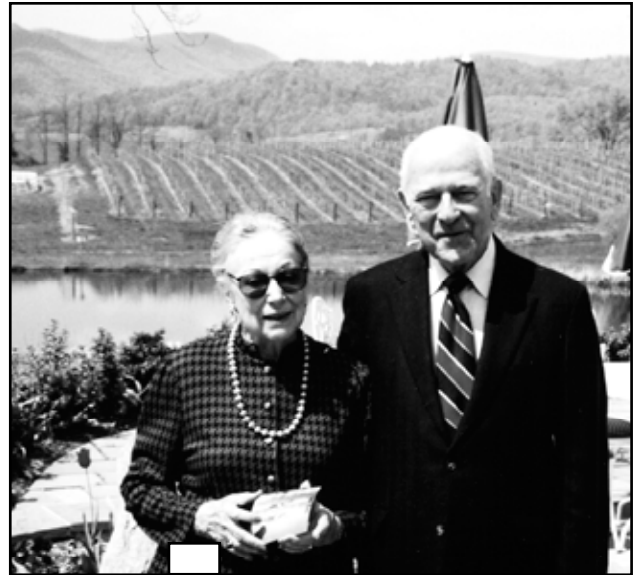
Date of Designation: December 1937 NA # 5462

Dates of Active Duty: June 1934 - 1 October 1962

Duty Assignment Chronology

Major General John Pomeroy Condon was born on December 20, 1911 in Hancock, Michigan. He graduated from high school in Houghton, Michigan in 1929. He attended Severn School in Severna Park, Maryland before entering the U. S. Naval Academy in 1930. He graduated from the Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD in 1934, where he was Captain of the lacrosse team his first class year and an all-American. The lacrosse team also beat Army that year. Following graduation, he attended The Basic School (TBS) at the Philadelphia Navy Yard where he graduated in 1935.

Following TBS, Lt. Condon's tours of duty included sea duty in USS *Pennsylvania* and company officer with the Sixth Marines. He reported to flight training in November 1936, and was designated a Naval Aviator in December 1937. He joined Marine Fighting Squadron One at Quantico in 1938. He was promoted to Captain in July 1940. Departing Quantico in October 1940 for temporary duty at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, he joined Marine Fighter Squadron 121 and moved the squadron to San Diego in December 1941. He was promoted to Major in May 1942, and embarked for the Pacific in January 1943. During the next six months he saw service on Guadalcanal with Fighter Command, Solomon Islands. As the Operations Officer of Fighter Command, he was responsible for planning missions for the Marine, Navy and Army Air Force squadrons in the area. It was here that he planned the mission to intercept and shoot down the aircraft carrying Fleet Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, Japan's Navy Minister and Commander In Chief of the Combined (Japanese) Fleet. Admiral Yamamoto was on an inspection tour of Japanese units in the southwest Pacific. The U. S. had broken the Japanese code and knew their itinerary for the Admiral and his party. The operation took place on 18



April 1943. As Admiral Yamamoto's planes arrived over Bougainville in the northern Solomons at 0935, they were met by 16 P-38 Lightnings of the Army Air Force. The Admiral's plane was shot down by one of the P-38's and he died in the crash. In his official history of the Naval war in the Pacific, Navy Rear Admiral Samuel Elliot Morrison said that "...the neat, planned kill was equivalent to a major victory." Major Condon was awarded his first of four Legion of Merit with Combat "V" for his service on Guadalcanal with Fighter Command, Solomon Islands.

He was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel in July 1943 and became Commanding Officer, Fighter Command, Forward Echelon, 1st MAW. In September, he led his command ashore at Bougainville. After returning to the States in 1944, he became Group XO at MCAS Santa Barbara. July 1945 saw him on Okinawa as Operations Officer of MAG-33 until he became CO of MAG-14 in September. In November, he became XO of MAG-31 and returned with MAG-31 to the States as the CO in July 1946. The period August 1946 to April 1948 saw then Lieutenant Colonel Condon in Washington, D.C. as Liaison Officer to the Deputy Chief of Naval Operations (Air). In April 1948 he was transferred to MCAS El Toro as CO of VMF-311, the first Marine jet squadron on the west coast.

He attended the Air War College at Maxwell AFB in Montgomery, Alabama in August 1949, and was promoted to Colonel that same year. Upon graduation in 1950, he was assigned to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, where he served until April 1952. He arrived in Korea for combat duty in May where he commanded MAG-33 and MAG-12. MAG-33's squadrons were the first Marine jets in combat and MAG-12's F4U Corsairs saw the last combat for that magnificent propeller driven fighter in the Marine Corps. He was awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross during combat action in Korea.

Colonel Condon reported to Headquarters Marine Corps in 1953. In August 1953, he was transferred down to the Marine Corps Educational Center, Quantico, Virginia

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where he became the Chief of Staff in August 1954. He left Quantico in February 1956 for the 2d MAW at Cherry Point where he became the Assistant Wing Commander in May 1957.

In April 1958 he reported for duty as Deputy Director for Operations (J-3) Division, H.Q., U. S. European Command. He was promoted to Brigadier General on 1 July 1958. In June 1961, he assumed command as CG, 1st MAW, in Iwakuni, Japan. He was promoted to Major General while he was CG, 1st MAW. He left Japan and reported to El Toro as CG, 3d MAW, which was his final tour of duty until he retired on 1 October 1962.

Following his retirement from the Marine Corps, General Condon joined North American Aviation and the Rockwell International Corporation for a final fourteen year career in industry. He ended his industry career with retirement from Rockwell in 1976. At the time of his retirement, he had just completed two years as the President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Alliance of Businessmen. He had been selected as a loaned executive from Rockwell International, where he was then Assistant to the President of the Corporation.

Besides a B.S. in Engineering from the U. S. Naval Academy in 1934, General Condon also earned an MBA in Administration from the University of California, Irvine, in 1969 and a PhD in Administration from UCI in 1975. He was a past President of the Marine Corps Historical Foundation and a recipient of its Heritage Award. He was the author of a history of Marine aviation on aircraft carriers that is scheduled to be published by the U. S. Naval Institute Press. He was also a member of the Early and Pioneer Naval Aviators Association (The Golden Eagles), the Marine Corps Association., USNA Alumni Association, longtime Treasurer of the Naval Academy Class of 1934, and a very active golfing member of the Belle Haven Country Club. Rest in peace General, your six is clean-Monk sends.

Major General John P. Condon, USMC (Ret.), died on 26 December 1996 of Lymphoma and an aneurism at his home in Alexandria, VA. Services were held in the Naval Academy Chapel on the 31 December with interment in the Naval Academy Cemetery. General Condon is survived by his wife Jane of Alexandria, Virginia; four daughters: Wendyn Anson of Boulder, CO; Mary Condon of Penngrove, CA; Jan D'Esposito of Islamorada, FL, and Catherine Condon of Laguna Beach, CA; seven grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Summary of Significant Career Events

- (1) Planned the mission to intercept and shoot down the aircraft carrying Fleet Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, Japan's Navy Minister and Commander In Chief of the Combined (Japanese) Fleet.
- (2) CO of VMF-311, the first Marine jet squadron on the west coast.