



John D. Harshberger, BGEN, USMC (Ret.)
“John”

Date of Designation: 1936 NA # 5354

Dates of Active Duty: 1936 - 1 November 1959

Total Flight Hours: 8,281 (Night 2,009, Instrument 1,668)

Combat Tours:

WW II: VMF(N)-531, Oct. 1943-May 1944, South Pacific

Aviation Commands:

CO, MAG-53, 9th MAW, Jan. 1958 - Nov. 1958

CO, MARTD, NAS Brooklyn, NY., Oct. 1950 - May 1952

CO, MAG-11, Jul. 1953 - Mar. 1954

Combat Awards:

Legion of Merit

Silver Star

Distinguished Flying Cross

Duty Assignment Chronology

BGEN John D. Harshberger entered the Marine Corps in August 1936 and became one of the pioneer pilots in the initial Marine night-fighter squadron during the early part of World War II.

Born October 22, 1911, the Chicago, Illinois native attended Nicholas Senn high school there before graduating from Alhambra, California high school in 1928. In 1934, he received a Bachelor of Science degree in Electrical Engineering from the California Institute of Technology at Pasadena, California.

He entered flight training at Pensacola, Florida in 1936 and received his commission upon graduation that year. In November 1936 he joined Marine Bomber Squadron 6 at Quantico prior to attending basic school at Philadelphia from July 1937 until May 1938, and then joined Marine Bomber

Squadron 1 at Quantico in June 1938. In May 1940, he was assigned as Engineering Officer with Marine Scout Squadron 3 at St. Thomas, Virgin Islands.

In January 1943, BGEN Harshberger became Executive Officer of the first Marine night-fighter squadron, VMF(N)-531, following its commissioning at Marine Corps Air Station, Cherry Point. Following the movement to the South Pacific, he destroyed a single-engined plane off Motupina Point on Bouganville on December 6, 1943, to account for the first Marine night-fighter interception coordinating with Marine ground control.

Upon leaving the squadron in May 1944 for the Bureau of Aeronautics, Washington, D. C., he had accounted for four out of the 12 enemy aircraft credited to the night-fighter squadron in the relatively infant stage of the new aerial tactic.

In December 1944, he became Commanding Officer of Marine Air Group 53, 9th Marine Air Wing at MCAS Eagle Mountain Lake, Texas. From January - November 1946, he served with MAG-24 in Peking, China, as Operations Officer and Executive Officer. In December of that year he became Executive Officer of MAG-15, MCAS Ewa, Hawaii.

He was under instruction at Marine Corps Schools, Quantico from August 1947 until June 1948, when he was attached to the Chief of Naval Operations, Headquarters, Marine Corps.

General Harshberger became Commanding Officer of Marine Air Reserve Training Detachment, NAS Brooklyn, in October 1950. In May 1952, he was assigned as AirFMFLant Inspector. Transferred overseas as Commanding Officer of MAG-11 in July 1953, he was moved to Marine Air Control Group 2 before becoming G-3, 1st MAW in March 1954.

From August 1954 to June 1955, he attended the Air War College at Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, Alabama, before joining the Marine Air Reserve Training

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Command on July 24, 1955. Serving as G-1, he assumed the duties as G-3 on September 11, 1956. He retired from active duty on 1 November 1959.

His wife is the former Miss Mary Elise Humphreys of Bloomington, IL. They have one daughter Lynn.