



Andrew O'Donnell, Lt. General, USMC

General O'Donnell was born on 25 January 1924, a native of Westchester County, NY. He received a BA degree from New York University and an MS from the George Washington University. He was commissioned out of the V-5 NavCad program as a Marine Corps second lieutenant upon completion of flight training in July 1944.

Over the next thirty-seven years, he served in one USAF and six Marine Corps fighter squadrons: VMF's 114, 115, 211, 212, 232 and 323. During his long career, he would move up to become Acting Wing Commander (AWC) of the 1st and 2d MAWs and Commanding General of the 3d. As a member of VMF-212 during the Korean War, he flew 127 combat missions. During one mission he was shot down and wounded. He was rescued at sea by a destroyer.

After Korea, General O'Donnell served two years as a flight instructor in the Jet Training Unit at Kingsville, Texas. He then reported to Kaneohe Bay to VMF-232 as Operations Officer.

Flying the FJ-2 Fury, he became the squadron Top Gun. AWS followed next, then an exchange tour with the USAF 613th Fighter Squadron where he participated in the first F-100 TransLant deployment using air-refueling. While in Bitburg, Germany, he was decorated for courageous action in single-handedly "bulldogging" an unmanned F-100 which was rolling to certain collision with other aircraft and a fuel truck.

Following the USAF exchange tour, General O'Donnell spent two years in VMF's 114 and 115 flying F4D Skyrays at Cherry Point and Atsugi, Japan. In July 1961, he returned to Quantico as an instructor in the Educational Center and as a member of the Amphibious Warfare Presentation Team which toured worldwide. Then, it was back to Cherry Point where he took command of the VMF-323 "Death Rattlers" in F-4 Phantoms for their 1965-66 deployment into Danang, South Vietnam, where he flew 161 combat missions. He finished the latter part of this first tour in Southeast Asia as MAG-11



Operations Officer.

Upon return from Vietnam, there was a succession of school and staff assignments. General O'Donnell graduated in 1968 from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces (ICAF), then reported to the Deputy Chief of Staff (Aviation) for duty in the Plans and Readiness Branch. While in that position, he was selected to serve as Military Secretary to the Commandant of the Marine Corps. Having previously been deep selected to colonel, during his tour as Military Secretary, he was deep selected to brigadier general in 1970.

As a brigadier, General O'Donnell reported to the 1st MAW as AWC. This led to a tour as CG Task Force Delta, the composite air group which 1st MAW deployed to Nam Phong, the "Rose Garden", in Thailand. While there, he flew another 25 F-4 combat missions against communist forces in Vietnam and Laos.

Subsequent commands as a brigadier included: 4th Marine Amphibious brigade for exercises in the U.S. and Europe; and Commander Landing Force Sixth Fleet during the 1973 Arab-Israeli crisis. Promotion to major general came in March 1975 and command of MCAS El Toro and Marine Corps Air Bases Western area (MCABWA). In August 1975 he took command of the 3d MAW, with collateral duty as CG I MAF (now MEF). In July 1976, he returned to HQMC as Director, Plans Division and, on 18 May 1977, was advanced to lieutenant general to assume duties as Deputy Chief of Staff, Plans and Policy (OpDep). On 1 October 1978, he was assigned to Hawaii as Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force Pacific - now known as MARFORPAC. He retired from this post on 1 July 1981.

In addition to three awards of the Distinguished Flying Cross, General O'Donnell's many decorations include the Purple Heart, the Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit with Combat "V" and Gold Star, the Bronze Star with Combat "V", 17 awards of the Air Medal, the Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V", the Air Force

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Commendation Medal, and the Vietnam Cross of Gallantry with Palm.

Thirty seven years after being commissioned, General O'Donnell was the senior naval aviator, known as the "Grey Eagle" for all of Naval Aviation. Beginning with the Corsair, he qualified in nearly all of the many fighter and attack aircraft which followed from Vought, Grumman, North American and McDonnell from the late 1940's into the 1980's. He was also a Centurion, with well over 100 carrier landings and his log book had more than 8,000 flight hours, many of them spent in combat.

General O'Donnell died on January 20, 1997 at his home in Coronado, CA., from Lou Gherig's disease (amyotrophic lateral sclerosis). He was 72. He is survived by his wife of nearly 50 years, Patricia "Patty" Ann; daughters Kerry Kruger and Barbie Satterwhite, of Houston, and Jody Hayter, of San Diego; and son Marine Major Drew O'Donnell.