



Theodore A. Petras, Colonel, USMC (Ret.)
 “Pete”

Date of Designation: 2 July 1932

Dates of Active Duty: 5 November 1929 - 31 October 1959

Total Flight Hours: 10,170

Approximate Flight Hours:

Prop: 8,683 VF/VA: 800 Other: 7,883

Combat Tours:

WW II: 1st Marine Division, Jun. 1943 - Jul. 1944.
 Cape Gloucester, New Britain - 83 Missions.

Aviation Commands:

OIC, HQVSMC (Flight Section), NAS Anacostia,
 Jul. 1944 - Jul. 1950
 OIC, 1st Marine Air Wing (Flight Section), Korea,
 Jun. 1951 - Nov. 1952

Combat Awards:

2 Distinguished Flying Crosses
 8 Air Medals
 Bronze Star with Combat “V”
 Congressional Medal of Antarctic (Non-combat)

Duty Assignment Chronology

11/29 Enlisted in U. S. Marine Corps. First duty in Haiti.

1932 Assigned to and graduated from Naval Flight School with wings.

1932-1933 After another assignment to Haiti during the “Banana Wars”, returned to Quantico, VA., as a member of the famous VF9M stunt and fighter squadron, which toured the U. S. and Canada.

1937-39 Married Josephine Albis of Richmond. Sent to St. Thomas, V.I, Bowen Field, Squadron VO9M, and served there for 28 months as Pilot and Assistant Radio and Communications Off.



1939-1941 When the second U.S. Antarctic Expedition was formed, was selected as Chief Pilot serving under RADM Richard E. Byrd. During one of many flights over unexplored areas, discovered an unknown and unnamed mountain peak of 12,500 feet elevation. It was aptly named Mount Josephine after my wife by Dr. Paul Siple, Leader and Scientist of the expedition.



Ted Petras with 1939-41 U. S. Antarctic Expedition, RADM Richard E. Byrd Commanding.

1941-1944 As the Pacific theater developed, Lt. Petras was ordered to the First Marine Division as Command Pilot for General A. A. Vandergrift, (Division Commander) and General Rupertus. Proceeded to New Zealand, followed by the Guadalcanal campaign and later to Australia in preparation for the Battle of New Britain under McArthur. Formed the First Provisional Air Observation Unit with 12 cub aircraft, Cape Gloucester, New Britain and New Guinea.

1944-1950 After the war, was assigned to Anacostia with the rank of Major as Staff Pilot for Marine Corps Commandant, General A. A. Vandergrift, General C. B. Cates during his tenure as

- Continued -

- Commandant and General L. C. Shepherd.
Was Officer-in-Charge of the HQ Flight Section.
- 1950-1951 Air Field Operations Officer, MCAS El Toro, CA.
- 1951-1952 Transferred to Korea, as Commanding Officer of Marine Air Freight and Passenger Service in Korea. (22 planes, providing service for 10,000 air passengers and 5.5 million pounds of air cargo per month).
- 1953-1955 Commanding Officer of Marine Air Repair Squadron, MCAS Miami. Under his command were 14 officers and 350 enlisted personnel.
- 1955-1957 Commanding Officer, Headquarters Squadron, Aircraft, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, El Toro, CA. Commanded 500 men and 40 officers.
- 1957-1958 Airfield Operations Officer, MCAS Miami, FL. Commanded 16 officers and 250 men. (Remained in this billet until complete decommissioning of MCAS Miami).
- 1958-1959 Airfield Operations Officer, MCAS Beaufort, SC.
- 11/1/59 Retired from active duty with 30 years of service.

Summary of Significant Career Events

- (1) Chief Pilot serving under RAdm Richard E. Byrd for second U. S. Antarctic Expedition.
- (2) Received Congressional Medal of Antarctic.
- (3) Staff Pilot for Marine Corps Commandants, General A. A. Vandergrift and General C. B. Cates.

Flight Qualifications.

He has a total of 10,170 hours, a current "special" instrument rating and is currently qualified in the C-54, DC-3, Super DC-3 and twin-engine Beechcraft. He also had experience in crop-dusting and pest control. Holds a Master Certificate in Motor Boat and is cleared by the National Security Agency for Top Secret.

Schools Completed.

Colonel Petras has completed or graduated from the following schools within the Corps.

- Naval Aviation Engineering School
- Aircraft Engine Maintenance
- Marine Corps Exchange Accounting
- Special Weapons Deployment
- Special Weapons School, Advanced Course
- Administrative School
- Business Management and Public Relations

Personal Decorations.

Colonel Petras holds the following decorations:

- Two (2) Distinguished Flying Crosses
- Eight (8) Air Medals
- Bronze Star with Combat "V"
- Presidential Unit Citation with two (2) Stars

- Navy Unit Citation
- Congressional Medal of Antarctic Expedition
- Navy Commendation Medal
- Marine Campaign Medal
- Asiatic Pacific Medal with four (4) Stars
- American Defense Medal with Star
- American Campaign Medal
- Korean Service Medal
- United Nations Medal
- World War II Victory Medal
- National Defense Service Medal
- Korean Presidential Unit Citation

Other Information.

Reports of Fitness from General Officers include:

- A. A. Vandergrift, Commandant, USMC
- C. B. Cates, Commandant, USMC
- L. C. Shepherd, Commandant, USMC
- C. F. Schilt, Assistant Commandant for Air, USMC
- E. O. Pollock, Commander, FMFLANT.
- Field Harris, Assistant Commandant for Air, USMC
- V. E. Megee
- J. E. Jerome
- M. L. Dawson
- A. F. Binney

Markings received were "Excellent and Outstanding" -- the highest possible to attain in performance of duties.

Personal Information.

Colonel Petras has been married for 60 years and has three children, eight grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. Permanent residence is Virginia Beach, VA.

Colonel Petras is a Master Mason; past President of the National Sojourners, Miami Chapter; past Commander, Order of Heroes 76, National Sojourners, Miami; Member of Toastmasters International and extremely active in Boy Scouts of America.

After retiring from the Marine Corps he worked with U. S. Customs as a part time inspector in Miami, FL. Moving to Norfolk, Virginia in 1967, he became a member of Local 1840 as a terminal cargo checker for 13 years and finally retiring for the third time in May of 1979.