



Kenneth L. Reusser, Col USMC

“Ken”

Date of Designation: 16 April 1942 NA# 15608

Dates of Active Duty: August 1941 - July 1968

Total Flight Hours: 9,218

Carrier/Ship Landings: Fixed wing: 244 Rotary: 153

Approximate Flight Hours:

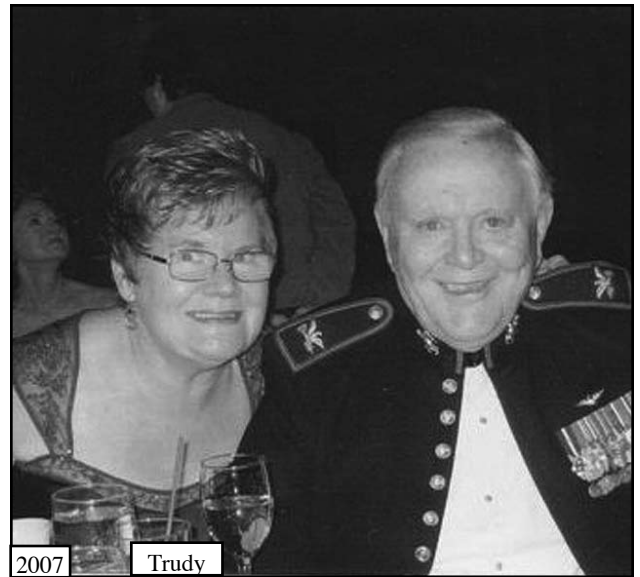
Jet: 1,688 Prop: 6,880 VF/VA: 8,133 VT: 435
Helo: 625 LTA: 25

Combat Tours:

WWII: Sept. 1942 - Dec. 1942, Guadalcanal (F4F-3)
Apr. 1945 - May 1945, Okinawa (F4U)
Korea: July 1950 - Feb. 1951 USS *Sicily*, Kimpo (F4U-4)
Vietnam: Nov. 1966 - Dec. 1966 Danang, VN (HU-1)
Total Combat Missions: 363 (F4F, F4U, HU-1, CH-34, CH-46)

Commands:

CO, MARTD Atlanta, Mar. 1948 - Apr. 1949 (F4U, SNJ)
CO, VMA-324, MCAS Miami, Med Cruise USS *Lake Champlain*, Apr. 1954 - July 1956 (AD-4)
CO, MARTD, NAS Sand Point Seattle, Jun. 1956 - Jun. 1958 (F9F, AD-4/5)
CO, SOES-12, Quantico, Sept. 1960 - May 1963 (F4U, AD, SNB, T-28, R4D)
CO, MAG-26, New River, Sept. 1965 - Aug. 1966 (CH-34, OE-2, CH-46)
CO, MAG-16, Danang Vietnam, Nov. 1966 - Dec. 1966 (UH-1, CH-34, CH-46, CH-53)



Combat Awards:

2 Navy Crosses
2 Legion of Merit w Combat "V"
5 Distinguished Flying Crosses
1 Bronze Star w Combat "V"
4 Purple Hearts
19 Air Medals

Duty Assignment Chronology

8/23/41 Enlisted as a Seaman Recruit in the U.S. Navy and entered Naval Flight Training program.
4/3/42 Graduated Naval Aviator, Commissioned 2ndLt USMC (N2S, Ryan, SNJ, OS2U, F3F).
5/42-10/42 VMF-122 (F4F-3). Mitsubishi Betty probable on first combat mission. Injured ditching F4F-3 in the water off Guadalcanal.
12/42-5/43 Released from Naval Hospital after recovering from injuries and reconstructive surgery. Promoted to Captain
6/43-1/44 Training with VMF-312 (FG-1, F4U).
2/44-3/45 VMF-312, Hawaii, South Pacific, USS *Nassau* (CVE 16).
4/45-8/45 VMF-312, USS *Hollandia* (CVE 97). Okinawa. CAP and CAS. Awarded the Navy Cross for sharing the downing of a Japanese KI-45 high altitude reconnaissance airplane. (F4U-1D).
1946-1948 Marine Air Ground Infantry School NavAirTech TrnCmd, Jacksonville FL. OIC Southeast Recruiting District (SNB, R4D, F8F, F2H-2, SBD-5, F3D, F6F, F2G)
3/48-5/49 CO, MARTD, NAS Atlanta (F4U, SNJ). Promoted to Major.
6/49-7/50 VMF-214, USS *Badoeng Strait* (CVE 116) (F4U-4). USS *Sicily* (CVE 118)/Kimpo. First Marine Air strikes in the Korean War (F4U-4).
5/8/50 Awarded second Navy Cross for air attacks against North Korean tank factories, fuel farm and fuel ships (F4U-4).

Duty Assignment Chronology continued



- 4/54 VMA-324, Opelaka USS *Lake Champlain* (CV-39) Med cruise (F4U-3 AD-4).
- 1954-4/54 Staff and Command School DUINS, Quantico.
- 4/54-5/56 VMA-324, MCAS Miami/USS *Lake Champlain* (CV-39) Med cruise (F4U-3, AD-4)
- 6/56-6/58 CO, MARTD, NAS Sand Point, Seattle, WA. (AD-4/5, F4U-5, F9F, T-33, T-28).
- 1958-1959 Task Force 79 G-2, Okinawa, Japan.
- 8/60-5/62 CO, SOES 12, Quantico, VA (F4U, AD, SNB, T-28, T-34, OE-2, A4D).
- 5/62-5/63 XO, MCAS Quantico, VA. Promoted to Col.
- 5/63-64 CO, MAG 26, New River, NC. Deployed to Haiti for hurricane relief (CH-34, CH-46).
- 1964-1965 2nd MAW G-3, (F4 Phantom II, A4D). 4th MEB Chief of Staff. Deployed Santo Domingo uprising. Awarded first Legion of Merit.
- 1965-1966 Canadian National Defense College re: one year course in Geopolitics (T-33).
- 11/66-12/66 MAG-16 CO, Danang, Vietnam. Flew several combat missions before being shot down and severely wounded while in the process of directing a downed aircraft retrieval operation. (HU-1, CH-46, CH-53).
- 1967 Hospitalized with severe gunshot wounds and burns.
- 12/67-7/68 Naval Air Systems Command. CH-46 grounded world wide. Assigned TDY as team member to solve, then explain solution whenever craft was flown, including Vietnam. Awarded 2nd Legion of Merit.
- July 1968 Retired from USMC due to combat wounds.

Summary of Significant Career Events

(1) Completed flight training in the Civilian Pilot Training program, and obtained private and commercial licenses

prior to enlisting for Navy flight training.

- (2) At Okinawa, awarded first Navy Cross while leading a flight of Corsairs intending to shoot down a Japanese KI 45 "Nick" high-altitude photo reconnaissance air plane which was gathering information for the day's Kamikaze flights. Two planes returned to base. With the faster Corsair a "Hail Mary" shot was taken before altitude-frozen guns stopped firing. The only weapon left was the Corsair itself. After attempting to disable the Nick with the F4U propeller, the wingman, First Lieutenant R. Klingman took a try at it. His guns were frozen also. so he too chewed away with his propeller. After several attempts the empennage of KI-45 was severely damaged and the Jap pilot lost control. The Nick entered a graveyard spiral and broke up before hitting the water. The Corsairs returned to land "on the fumes." The two pilots shared the kill and both were awarded the Navy Cross.
- (3) The second Navy Cross was awarded for making two very low-level passes down a street to identify through a building's windows what was hidden inside, and then lead a flight back to destroy this tank repair and assembly facility, including numerous tanks, soft vehicles, and artillery. With only 20mm guns remaining the flight hit and destroyed an oil-tank "farm." To cap the morning's events, as flight leader a firing pass was made on ship tied up to a camouflaged pier. Loaded with fuel the ship exploded and turned the Corsair inverted. After bringing it upright, the flight returned to the USS *Sicily* where the severely crippled Corsair was pushed over the side as being too damaged to economically repair.
- (4) Accepted and delivered the first jet- powered HUEY for the Marine Corps.
- (5) Night School attendance in the late 1940s, and again in the early 1960s, produced a BS degree from Univ. of Georgia and a Masters from George Washington University.
- (6) Attended The Canadian National Defense College for graduate studies in Geopolitics program, which included a trip around the world and meeting political leaders in many countries.
- (7) Member of the Legion of Valor for having been awarded two Navy Crosses.
- (8) Awarded two Legion of Merit for exemplary service, both presented with the "Combat V".
- (9) In 2007 enshrined into the Oregon Military Hall of Fame.
- (10) Coordinated with Red Carmody the Navy-Lockheed Skunk Works U-2 carrier operations and Navy U-2 high altitude sea surveillance flights.