



William G. Thrash, LTGEN, USMC (Ret.)
“Gay”

Date of Designation: 18 March 1942 NA # 11821

Dates of Active Duty: 14 July 1939 - 30 June 1972

Combat Tours:

- WW II: MAG-12, 1st MAW, Nov. 1942 - Jan. 1944
Gilbert & Solomon Islands -100 combat missions.
- Korea: 1st MAW, Jun. 1951 - Sep. 1953
- Vietnam: CG, 1st MAW, Jul. 1969 - Jul. 1970

Combat Awards:

- Distinguished Service Medal (Vietnam)
- Legion of Merit with Combat “V” (Korea)
- Legion of Merit (Korea)
- Silver Star (Korea)
- Distinguished Flying Cross (WW II)
- 7 Air Medals (5-WW II, 2-Korea)
- Purple Heart

Duty Assignment Chronology

General Thrash was born in Tifton, Georgia on September 17, 1916. He attended High School and College in Atlanta, Georgia, graduating from the Georgia Institute of Technology in 1939. Commissioned a Second Lieutenant upon graduation, he attended the Basic School in Philadelphia, then served with the First Marine Brigade in San Diego, and was ordered to Pensacola for Flight Training in 1941.

In World War Two he first served with VMD-154 in the Gilbert Solomons Islands, and later in The South Pacific aboard the Aircraft Carrier *Salerno Bay* as the Commanding Officer of Marine Carrier Air Group Five. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross and Five Air Medals.

Between World War II and Korea, Lieutenant Colonel Thrash served in Headquarters Marine Corps, attended the Naval War College, and instructed the Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia.



He was assigned to Korea in 1951, and served in Marine Aircraft Group Twelve, where he was awarded the Silver Star, Legion of Merit, and the Purple Heart. Lieutenant Colonel Thrash was shot down in combat in December 1951, and remained a Prisoner of War of the Communists until September 1953. For meritorious service as the Senior Officer in the Communist Prison, he was awarded his second Legion of Merit.

Upon his return from Korea, he had a short tour with the Third Marine Aircraft Wing in Miami, Florida, and was then ordered to the Division of Aviation in Headquarters, Marine Corps.

In 1958, Colonel Thrash attended the National War College, and upon graduation was ordered to the First Marine Brigade in Hawaii. He served as the Commanding Officer of Marine Aircraft Group Twelve, and later as Chief of Staff of the Brigade.

In 1962, he was deployed to Thailand as the Chief of Staff of the Second Marine Expeditionary Unit, and upon its return was assigned as the Chief of Staff of the First Marine Aircraft Wing in Iwakuni, Japan.

In March he was promoted to Brigadier General and assigned as the Legislative Assistant to the Commandant of the Marine Corps. In 1967 he was promoted to Major General and ordered to the west coast as the Commanding General, Marine Corps Air Bases West.

In 1969, Major General Thrash was ordered to Vietnam as the Commanding General First Marine Aircraft Wing. General Thrash was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal for his services in this assignment. Upon his return in 1970, he was ordered to Quantico as the Director of Education. In 1971, he was promoted to Lieutenant General and assumed the duties of Commanding General, Marine Corps Development and Education Command.

Duty Assignment Chronology continued

Lieutenant General Thrash retired in 1972 and joined The Presley Companies as Vice President and a member of The Board of Directors. He was subsequently promoted to President and retired from the company to form his own Residential Building and Development Company. He retired from the Building Business in 1993, and moved to Hilton Head, South Carolina, where he currently resides.