



Joel E. Bonner Jr., Colonel, USMC (Ret.)
 "Pete"

Date of Designation: January 1943

Dates of Active Duty: 7 May 1942 - 30 June 1971

Total Flight Hours: 5,566

Carrier/Ship Landings: Fixed wing: 25

Approximate Flight Hours:

Jet: 800 Prop: 4,766 VF/VA: 4,216 VR/VP: 1,350

Combat Tours:

WW II: VMF(N)-532, Jan. 1944-Sep. 1944, Tarawa, Kwajalein, Eniwetok and Saipan - 116 combat missions.

Korea: VMF(N)-542, Sep. 1950-Aug. 1951 - 92 combat missions

Vietnam: Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, Jun. 1967-Jun. 1968 - 29 combat missions

Aviation Commands:

CO, Marine Photographic Squadron TWO (VMJ-2), April 1954-July 1955 (F9F-6P).

CO, Marine Air Reserve Training Detachment, NAF Andrews AFB, July 1962-July 1964 (FJ-4).

CO, Marine Air Group 14, May 1966-February 1967 (A6A, RF-4B, A-4).

Combat Awards:

Legion of Merit with combat "V" and Gold Star
 Distinguished Flying Cross
 8 Air Medals

Duty Assignment Chronology

Colonel Bonner was born March 23, 1922 in Dallas, Texas. He graduated from Waco High School (Waco, Texas) in 1939, and from North Texas Agriculture College, Arlington,



Texas in 1941. He received a Bachelor's Degree in Military Science in 1961 from the University Maryland.

He entered flight training at NAS Dallas in May 1942, and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant and designated a Naval Aviator in January 1943. After undergoing further operational training at Miami and Daytona Florida, he checked out on an aircraft carrier in Lake Michigan. Following carrier qualification, he joined Marine Night Fighter Squadron 532 (VMF(N)-532) at MCAS Cherry Point North Carolina.

In 1944 he flew as a pilot with VMF(N)-532, the first single engine night fighter squadron in the Marine Corps. At that time there was one other single engine night fighter squadron in the Navy, VF(N) at Quonset Point, Rhode Island. The Navy VF(N) was deployed to the South Pacific and VMF(N)-532 was deployed to the Central Pacific. He participated in aerial combat operations at Tarawa, Kwajalein, Eniwetok and Saipan. He was credited with a probable kill of a Japanese "Betty" Bomber.

Returning to the United States, he served at NAS San Diego; MCAS Eagle, Mountain Lake, Texas; MCAS Cherry Point NC; and MCAS Miramar, CA., as a night fighter pilot and instructor.

Early in 1949, he went to MCAS Quantico, Virginia where he served as Air Field Operations Officer and flew on the Close Air Support demonstration team before attending the Amphibious Warfare School.

In July 1950, at the beginning of the Korean War, he was assigned to VMF(N)-542 at MCAS El Toro, California. VMF(N)-542 was deployed to Korea in September 1950. The Squadron entered combat at Kimpo Airport near Seoul, Korea. He flew night and day Close Air Support missions in support of the First Marine Division in the battle to take the city of Seoul and subsequent operations in the link-up of Army forces from the South.

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Duty Assignment Chronology continued

In December of 1950, he and three other pilots landed at Ham Hung airfield as the first echelon of Air Support for the First Marine Division which was driving north near the Chosin Reservoir. It was at that time that the Chinese Army attacked the Marines and the U.S. Army troops on their right flank. The squadron was totally committed to fly night and day Close Air Support missions along with carrier aircraft, as well as, other Marine aircraft at Ham Hung and Wonsan.

In January 1951, the Squadron was deployed back to Japan and flew long range night missions from the Island of Kyushu to as far north as Pyongyang, North Korea. He rotated back to the U.S. in the summer of 1951, and served as the Executive Officer of VMF-232 at MCAS El Toro, California, before being assigned to MCAS Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii.

In 1954 and 1955 he was Commanding Officer of Marine Photographic Squadron TWO (VMJ-2) flying one of the first swept wing aircraft squadrons in the Marine Corps.

He was assigned to MCAS and Marine Corps Schools Quantico, Virginia until 1959 when he reported to the First Marine Air Wing in Japan where he was the S-3 Operations Officer for Marine Air Group Eleven (MAG-11). In 1960 he attended the University of Maryland under the College Degree Program. Upon leaving the University of Maryland he became the Commanding Officer of the Marine Air Reserve Training Detachment at Andrews Air Force Base, Washington, D.C., for two years.

In 1963 he began a 29 month tour in Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05). In 1966 he returned to MCAS Cherry Point, NC., where he served as Commanding Officer of Marine Air Group Fourteen (MAG-14). His primary mission in MAG-14 was to train, equip and deploy A-6 squadrons to Vietnam. After MAG-14 he became Chief of Staff of the Second Marine Air Wing.

In 1967 he went to Vietnam and became the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3 Operations Officer. This assignment included providing air support for units and troops in the Battles of Khe Sanh, Hue and Dong Ha. This was during the period of the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong 1968 Tet offensive.

He returned to the U.S. in the Summer of 1968 and became the Deputy to the Legislative Assistant to the Commandant of the Marine Corps. He retired from the Marine Corps in June 1971.

Subsequent to the Marine Corps, he was on the professional staff of the U.S. Senate Committee for Appropriations for 10 years. Leaving the Senate as Staff Director of the Committee, he joined the Reagan administration as the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Financial Management, Logistics and Installations. In the summer of 1983, he

became the Manager of Washington Engineering operations for Hughes Aircraft Company. He retired from Hughes in December 1989.

Summary of Significant Career Events

- (1) Was one of the first single engine night fighter pilots in the U.S. Marine Corps.
- (2) Completed total of 237 combat missions in WWII, Korea and Vietnam. Credited with probable kill of a Japanese "Betty" Bomber.
- (3) Staff Director of U. S. Senate Appropriations Committee.
- (4) Assistant Secretary of the Army for Financial Management, Logistics and Installations during the Regan administration.