

United States Marine Corps (Ret.)

Lieutenant General

Charles H. Pitman



Lieutenant General Charles H. Pitman was the former Deputy Chief of Staff for Aviation, Headquarters Marine Corps, Washington, D.C.

General Pitman enlisted in the Naval Reserve in October 1952, and subsequently enlisted in the Marine Corps. Entering flight training as a Naval Aviation Cadet in 1954, he received his wings in August 1955, and joined Marine Helicopter Transport Squadron 363, Santa Ana, California. The following January, he deployed to the Pacific Proving Grounds, where he served for seven months aboard the USS BADOENG STRAIT (CVE-116).

Returning to the United States in September 1956, he was transferred to the Marine Corps Auxiliary Air Station, Mojave, California, where he performed duties as airfield operations officer, search and rescue pilot and Provost Marshal. In January 1958, he returned to Pensacola for jet transition. Upon completion, he was assigned to the Multi-Engine Training Group as a flight instructor. He was later assigned as officer-in-charge, Third Cadet Battalion, U.S. Naval School, Preflight.

Following his promotion to captain in January 1960, General Pitman attended Photographic Reconnaissance School, transferred to El Toro, California, where he was assigned to Marine Composite Reconnaissance Squadron 3. In November 1962, he deployed to VMCJ-1, flying the RF-8 and EF-10 on reconnaissance missions throughout the Far East.

Returning from overseas in November 1963, he joined VMCJ-2 at Cherry Point, North Carolina. A year later, he was assigned as Aide-de-Camp to the Commanding General, 2d Marine Aircraft Wing.

He was promoted to major in 1966, and reported to Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 261 at New River, N.C., for duty as operations officer and then executive officer, flying the CH-46. Leaving in November 1966 for Vietnam, he served initially as maintenance and later as operations officer in HMM-265 at Marble Mountain, Phu Bai and Khe Sahn.

He transferred to Washington, D.C., in February 1968, for duty as a weapons systems analyst in the Office of the Chief of Naval Operations (OP-05W), where his assignments involved evaluation of tactical air capabilities, both U.S. and foreign. While assigned to OPNAV, he returned to Vietnam in October and November 1968 to evaluate several new airborne detection systems.

In January 1970, he attended the Armed Forces Staff College. Graduating in June, he transitioned to the UH-1, and attended the Army's Cobra School. By then, a lieutenant colonel, he returned to Vietnam, where he commanded Headquarters and Maintenance Squadron, flying UH-1s and CH46s. While transitioning to the CH-53, he was wounded while flying in Laos as part of Operation LAM SON 719. After being stabilized at Kuhe Hospital, Okinawa, he was evacuated to the Naval Medical Center, Bethesda, Maryland.

After recovering, he assumed command of Marine Air Reserve Training Detachment, New Orleans, in July 1971, again flying the CH46. He held this assignment until leaving to attend the Air War College in June 1973. In conjunction with this assignment, he completed his B.S. degree in Business Administration at Troy State.

Transferred to Headquarters Marine Corps in May 1974, he served two years as Aviation's Program Coordinator. After being promoted to colonel in October 1976, he served two years with the Secretary of the Navy's Office of Program Appraisal.

General Pitman transferred to Okinawa in July 1978, where he assumed command of Marine Aircraft Group 36. The following year, he returned to Washington where he was assigned as Marine Corps Aide to the Secretary of the Navy, and later as the Marine Corps Member, Chairman's Staff Group, Office of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as his advisor on the Middle East, Africa, South/Central America, Counterterrorism and the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force.

In June 1981, General Pitman assumed duty as Commanding Officer, Marine Aviation Training Support Group, Pensacola, Florida. While serving in this capacity, he was selected for promotion to brigadier general. He was advanced to that grade on May 11, 1982 and assigned duty as the Assistant Chief of Staff, C-5, ROK/U.S. Combined Forces Command in Seoul, Korea.

In August 1984, he returned to the 3d Marine Aircraft Wing, MCAS El Toro, California, where he served as Assistant Wing Commander until advanced to major general in April 1985. He then proceeded to Okinawa, Japan, where he commanded the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing from June 12, 1985 until his transfer to Headquarters, Marine Corps on Sept. 9, 1987. He then served as Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Aviation until assuming his present position on May 1, 1988. General Pitman was advanced to lieutenant general on July 7, 1988.

His personal decorations include: the Silver Star Medal; Defense Superior Service Medal with bronze oak leaf cluster in lieu of second award; Legion of Merit; Distinguished Flying Cross with gold stars in lieu of second, third and fourth awards; Bronze Star Medal with Combat "V"; Purple Heart; Defense Meritorious Service Medal; Air Medal with gold Numeral 3 and bronze Numeral 62; Navy Commendation Medal with Combat "V"; the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry with silver star; and the Korean Order of National Security Merit, Cheonsu Medal.

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