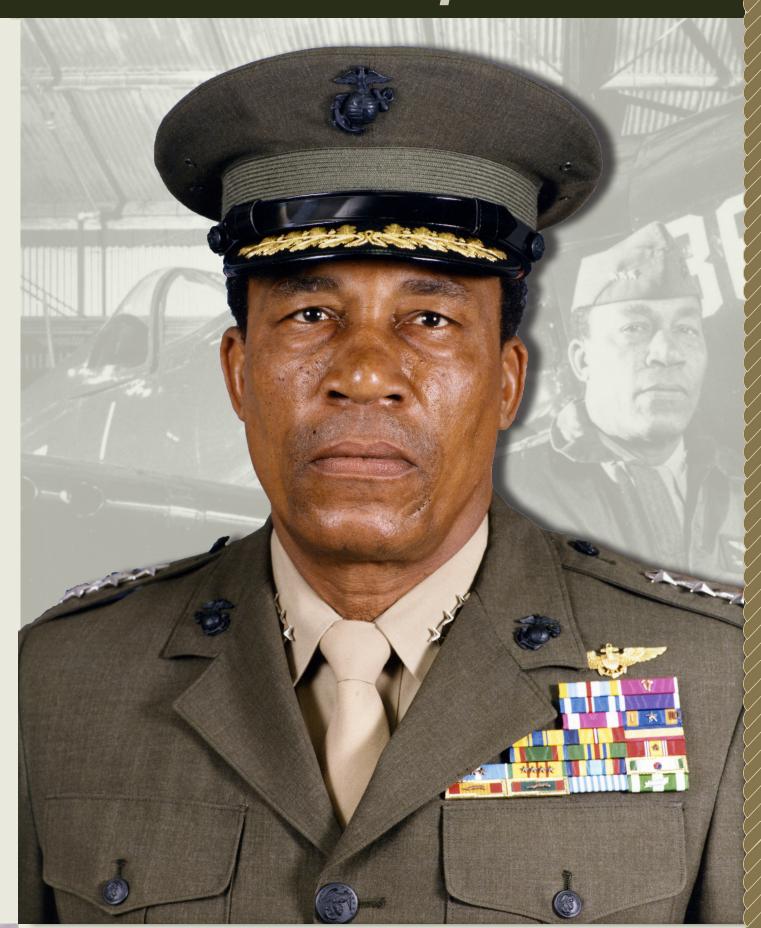


USS FRANK E. PETERSEN JR. (DDG 121)

Honoring A U.S. Marine Corps Pioneer

A Distinguished History

- Born March 2, 1932, in Topeka, Kan., Frank E. Petersen Jr. joined the U.S. Navy as a seaman apprentice in June 1950. He served as an electronics technician and in 1951 entered the Naval Aviation Cadet Program.
- In October 1952, Petersen completed flight training and accepted a commission as a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps.
- Petersen served two combat tours: Korea in 1953 and Vietnam in 1968. He flew more than 350 combat missions and had more than 4,000 hours in various fighter/attack aircraft.
- He was the first African American Marine Corps aviator and the first African American Marine Corps officer to be promoted to brigadier general.
- At the time of his retirement in August 1988, Lieutenant General Petersen was, by date of aviator designation, the senior ranking aviator in the U.S. Marine Corps and the U.S. Navy with respective titles of "Silver Hawk" and "Grey Eagle."





DDG Quick Facts:

Name: USS Frank E. Petersen Jr. (DDG 121)

Class: Arleigh Burke

Mission: Provide multi-mission offensive and defensive

capabilities

Length: 509 feet

peed: 30+ knots

Crew: 329 total

A Historic Look at African Americans in the U.S. Marine Corps

1941



President Franklin D. Roosevelt signs Executive Order 8802, Prohibition of Discrimination in the Defense Industry, June 25, 1941, during the early days of WWII. The order calls for the end of job discrimination in the defense industry and thus opens the Corps' ranks to African Americans.

1942



On June 1, 1942, Howard P. Perry becomes the first African American U.S. Marine Corps recruit following Executive Order 8802.

1942



The first African American recruits arrive at Montford Point in Jacksonville, N.C., August 26, 1942. A memorial now stands outside the gates of Camp Johnson to commemorate their historic achievements in the face of racial segregation.

1945



On November 10, 1945, 2nd Lt. Frederick C. Branch of Charlotte, N.C., becomes the first African American commissioned officer after completing fully integrated training. 1946



On July 26, 1948, President
Harry S. Truman signs
Executive Order 9981 to
end racial segregation
and discrimination in the
military. Although it would
take more than six years to
fully implement, Truman's
order set in motion a wave
of reforms for equality for
African Americans

1950



Frank E. Petersen Jr. becomes the first African American Marine Corps aviator January 1, 1950.



On February 28, 1967,
Pfc. James Anderson
Jr. becomes the first
African American Medal
of Honor recipient in
the Marine Corps by
sacrificing his life by
smothering a grenade
with his body in Cam Lo,
Vietnam.

2012



On June 27, 2012, Congress authorizes the Congressional Gold Medal to be awarded to each of the 20,000 Montford Point Marines or to their families in recognition of the accomplishments and sacrifices made during a time of segregation.

"[He was] a pioneer and role model in many ways, a stellar leader, Marine officer, and aviator."

- Gen. John M. Paxton Jr., the 33rd Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, on Lt. Gen. Frank E. Petersen Jr.