



**National President:**  
**Ken Hopper, "Chopper" Colonel, USMC (Ret.)**

Ken began his Marine Corps career in May 1979 and served 30 years retiring June 2009. After receiving his Naval Aviator wings in 1982, he reported to VMGR-252 where he served as the squadron Safety Officer. He deployed to Okinawa, Japan and flew with VMGR-152 and served as the squadron Training Officer. Upon his return to '252 he became the Maintenance Officer. In 1988 he was selected to fly with the United States Naval Flight Demonstration Team, the Blue Angels, to fly "Fat Albert". Following a successful three year tour, he was ordered to augment VMGR-234 during the buildup for DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM and when the squadron was mobilized he was ordered to augment VMGR-352 in theatre, flying combat missions until the end of the war. Later in 1991 he transferred to the IRR and remained there until he joined the SMCR with MAG-41 at NAS Dallas, TX in 1992. While at MAG-41 he served as the Ground Safety Officer, Ground Training Officer, Assistant Ops Officer and finally Logistics Officer.

From 1997-2000 he twice commanded combat deployments to support of OPERATION NORTHERN WATCH. In 1999, he was selected to become the Commanding Officer of VMGR-234. Following his change-of-command in February 2002, he was recalled to active duty and ordered to I MEF deploying to Kuwait as the Air Officer serving in this position for the first five months of OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM. He then became the Deputy Director, Operations for I MEF and eventually he became the I MEF Director, Operations. He deployed again in 2004 with I MEF for OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM II serving as the Deputy Director, Operations. At the end of 2004 he was ordered to report to the Commanding General II MEF to serve as the Chief of Staff, II MACE. He served in that position till 2006 when he was released from active duty. He was then selected to report to the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, The Pentagon where he served in the J-3 as a Team Chief within the National Military Command Center and as Branch Chief, J-34 Homeland Defense. During this tour he was also the Senior Reserve Marine on the Joint Staff.

Ken is a graduate of The Citadel and has a Master's Degree from Troy State University in Management; and a Master's Degree in Public Administration from George Mason University. His military schools include Marine Corps Amphibious Warfare School, the Marine Corps Command and Staff University, the Air Force Command and Staff College, the Naval War College, and the Advanced Joint Professional Military Education, Joint Forces



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University. He is a carrier qualified aviator, qualifying on both the USS Kitty Hawk and the USS Independence.

He has accumulated over 10,000 flight hours, qualifying to fly in six different aircraft. His personal awards include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Joint Meritorious Service Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Navy/Marine Corps Commendation Medal with Gold Star, Navy/Marine Corps Achievement Medal, Military Outstanding Volunteer Medal, and the Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff Badge. Ken and his wife Sonja have five children and reside in Falls Church, VA. Chopper can be reached at [Ken.Hopper@USMCRA.ORG](mailto:Ken.Hopper@USMCRA.ORG)