



NEWS from U.S. Senator Bob Dole

(R.-Kans.)

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DOLE PRAISES GENERAL FRANK E. PETERSEN, JR., OF KANSAS, THE MARINE CORPS' FIRST BLACK AVIATOR TO ATTAIN STAR RANK

WASHINGTON-- Senator Bob Dole (R.-Kansas) today told his colleagues in the Senate that he and all Kansas are proud of the appointment and confirmation of Frank E. Petersen, Jr., of Topeka, Kansas, as a General in the United States Marine Corps.

Senator Dole entered the following statement into the official record:

"On March 12, 1979, the Senate confirmed numerous nominations in several of our military services. I am proud to note that among those to be confirmed was Frank E Petersen, Jr., from the Great State of Kansas.

"Frank E. Petersen, Jr., born and raised in Topeka, Kansas, has become the Marine Corps' first black aviator to attain star rank. General Petersen's distinguished career in the Marine Corps began with his enlistment in the U.S. Navy in 1950. Determined to be the first black Marine pilot, he completed naval flight training at Pensacola, Florida, in 1952, with the designation of being a naval aviator and commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps Reserve.

"General Petersen's distinguished career includes air combat missions in Korea and Vietnam. For his service in Korea, he was awarded the distinguished flying cross, this nation's highest aviation medal

"In Vietnam, he commanded Marine Fighter Attack Squad 314, making him the first black in the naval service to command a tactical air squadron. Under his command, this squadron received the Hanson Award for aviation in 1968 as the best fighter squadron in the Marine Corps. For his service in Vietnam, he was awarded the Legion of Merit with combat 'V'. General Petersen is currently Chief of Staff for the 9th Marine Amphibious Brigade, based in Okinawa.

Was Special Assistant to the Commandant

"General Petersen's career has not been solely one of flying around the world in the defense of our country. In 1969, the post of Special Assistant to the Commandant for Minority Affairs was created and initially filled by then-Lieutenant Colonel Petersen. In this capacity he served as a valuable advisor to the Commandant on the fundamentals of minority problems and their resolution.

"This was a particularly important assignment for General Petersen and the Marine Corps when you consider the disproportionate number of senior black officers. Today there are approximately 33,500 blacks in the Marine Corps, representing 3.7 percent of the officers and 19.3 percent of enlisted personnel.

Marines Got A 'Good Man' in General Petersen

"The Marine Corps has a well-known recruiting 'jingle' which states they are not just looking to recruit anybody, but are out to recruit 'the best'. I believe the Marine Corps did exactly that when they found Frank Petersen.

"I join the people of Kansas and, particularly, those from Topeka, in congratulating General Petersen for his dedicated work and high principles which resulted in his historic promotion to Brigadier General in the United States Marine Corps.