

**James R. Coppersmith**  
**LtCol, U.S. Marine Corps**  
**Officer In Charge - Marine Aviation Detachment China Lake, CA**



LtCol Coppersmith, a native of Bellville, OH was commissioned in December 1992 through the Platoon Leaders Course Program following his graduation from the University of Cincinnati, where he earned a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering degree. Following graduation of The Basic School in April 1994, he proceeded to NAS Pensacola for naval aviation training

After nineteen months of flight training, LtCol Coppersmith was designated a Naval Aviator in December 1995 and assigned to VMAT-203 for Fleet Replacement Training in the AV-8B aircraft. Upon completion, Captain Coppersmith was assigned to VMA-214 where he served as the Airframes Division Officer. In December of 1998, LtCol Coppersmith

deployed with HMM-364(REIN), 13th MEU(SOC) where he served as the Current Operations Officer. LtCol Coppersmith returned to VMA-214 following deployment and served as the squadron's Intelligence Officer. In July 2000, LtCol Coppersmith deployed again with the 13th MEU(SOC) while attached to HMM-161(REIN) as a Future Operations Officer and VSTOL Training Landing Signals Officer. Following this deployment, LtCol Coppersmith returned to VMA-214 and served as the Airframes Division Officer. In June of 2000, LtCol Coppersmith was assigned to Class 121 at the US Naval Test Pilot School.

Upon graduating from the US Naval Test Pilot School in June 2001, LtCol Coppersmith was assigned to the Marine Aviation Detachment China Lake, CA as an Attack Weapons System Officer and Operational Test Director (OTD) at VX-9. While assigned to VX-9, LtCol Coppersmith executed the operational test of the Open Systems Core Avionics Requirement (OSCAR) hardware upgrade for the AV-8B aircraft utilizing the OC1.2 Operational Flight Program (OFP), the first Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM) capable OFP for the AV-8B. During this assignment, LtCol Coppersmith attended the Weapons and Tactics Instructor Course (WTI 2-04) at Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron One (MAWTS-1) as a student and concurrently led an Tactics Development and Evaluation effort that introduced the MAWTS-1 staff to the OSCAR capabilities and developed JDAM tactics for the AV-8B fleet squadrons. In June 2003, LtCol Coppersmith was reassigned to VX-31 and the AV-8B Joint Systems Support Activity (JSSA).

With the AV-8B JSSA, LtCol Coppersmith served as an AV-8B Developmental Test Pilot and Project Officer for the GBU-38 (500# JDAM) and Rover Video Downlink upgrade to the

LITENING AT Targeting Pod. LtCol Coppersmith's GBU-38 test team efforts will allow the Harrier fleet to obtain a flight clearance for the GBU-38 over a year earlier than was originally planned. In March 2005, LtCol Coppersmith was chosen by the Commanding Officer of VX-31 for assignment as the squadron's Operations Officer. As Operations Officer, LtCol Coppersmith managed the training and proficiency of 50 rated aircrew and operates six type/model/series aircraft with a flight operations budget of over \$26M.

In Jan 2006, LtCol Coppersmith was selected for a lateral move to the Marine Corps' Acquisition Management Primary Military Occupational Specialty. Upon selection, he was assigned to the Marine Aviation Detachment Patuxent River, MD as the AV-8B aircraft Assistant Program Manager for Systems Engineering. In June 2008, LtCol Coppersmith was assigned as the AV-8B US Military Deputy Program Manager for PMA-257.

In June 2009, LtCol Coppersmith was assigned to the Marine Aviation Detachment China Lake, CA as the detachment's Executive Officer and additionally served as the Pacific Ranges Chief Test Pilot and the Naval Air Warfare Center Weapons Division Environmental Deputy Program Manager. In July 2014, LtCol Coppersmith assumed his current duties in command of the Marine Aviation Detachment.

LtCol Coppersmith has flown over 2,100 flight hours in over 30 different aircraft and his personal awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal. He currently resides in Ridgecrest, CA.