

**James Coppersmith**  
**Technical Director**  
**Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 31**



James Coppersmith, a native of Bellville, Ohio, graduated from the University of Cincinnati in 1992 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Mechanical Engineering and served 24 years in the United States Marine Corps.

Coppersmith is a 2002 graduate of the United States Navy Test Pilot School (Class 121) and a graduate of the Marine Aviation Tactics and Weapons Squadron- 1 Weapons and Tactics Instructor course in the AV-8B Harrier II+ aircraft.

Coppersmith's operational experience included Fleet Marine Forces assignments with the VMA-214 "Blacksheep" from 1996 through 2000 at Marine Corps Air Station Yuma, Arizona. He deployed with HMM-364 (REIN), 13th MEU (SOC) aboard the USS Boxer (LHD-4) and again with the 13th MEU(SOC) while attached to HMM-161 (REIN) aboard the USS Tarawa (LHA-1). In June of 2000, Coppersmith was assigned to Class 121 at the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School.

Upon graduating from Test Pilot School in June 2001, Coppersmith was assigned as an operational test director at Air Test and Evaluation Squadron (VX) 9, where he executed the operational evaluation of the first Joint Direct Attack Munition-capable operational flight program for the AV-8B. During this assignment, Coppersmith attended Weapons and Tactics Instructor Course and concurrently led a Tactics Development and Evaluation effort that introduced JDAM tactics to AV-8B Fleet squadrons. In June 2003, he was reassigned to VX-31 and the AV-8B Joint Systems Support Activity (JSSA).

In January 2006, Coppersmith was selected for the Marine Corps' Acquisition Management Primary Military Occupational Specialty and assigned to PMA-257 at Naval Air Station Patuxent River, Maryland, as the AV-8B aircraft assistant program manager for Systems Engineering and as the AV-8B US Military Deputy Program Manager in a multi-nation joint development and sustainment program. In June 2009, he was assigned to the Marine Aviation Detachment China Lake-Point Mugu, California, as the detachment's executive officer and additionally served as the Pacific Ranges chief test pilot. In July 2014, Coppersmith assumed the duties of the officer-in-charge of the Marine Aviation Detachment, where he served until his retirement in June 2016.

Coppersmith left active duty at the rank of lieutenant colonel having flown over 2,200 mishap-free flight hours in over 35 different aircraft. His personal awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal.