

# Colonel Chris (Trey) Pappas III “Smear”

**Chief of Staff, Marine Corps Combat Development Command,  
and Deputy Commandant, Combat Development and Integration**



Colonel Pappas graduated from Duke University receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science and received his commission via the NROTC program in July of 1990. He completed The Basic School in March 1991 and was designated a Naval Flight Officer in April of 1993.

Following initial qualification in the FA-18D at MCAS El Toro, First Lieutenant Pappas reported to MAG-31 in MCAS Beaufort. Attached to VMFA(AW)-533, he completed two deployments to Aviano, Italy in support of OPERATION DENY FLIGHT, OPERATION DELIBERATE FORCE, and OPERATION DECISIVE ENDEAVOR. In June 1997, Capt Pappas reported to MCAS Cherry Point serving as the Aide-de-camp for the Commanding General of Second Marine Aircraft Wing before returning to VMFA(AW)-533 in May 1998 where he completed two deployments to MCAS Iwakuni, Japan and one deployment to Tazsar, Hungary in support of OPERATION ALLIED

FORCE and OPERATION NOBLE ANVIL. During this tour he attended the MAWTS-1 Weapons and Tactics Instructor course, USN Fighter Weapons School and was selected as the Marine Naval Flight Officer of the Year for 2000.

In August 2001, Major Pappas transferred to MCAS Yuma for duty as an FA-18 Instructor at MAWTS-1 where he deployed to Al Jabar, Kuwait in support of OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM with 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. He subsequently reported to the Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island, graduating with Highest Distinction and receiving a Master of Arts degree in National Security and Strategic Studies. In June 2005, he returned to MCAS Beaufort where he deployed to Al Asad, Iraq in support of OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM with 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing. Upon return, Lieutenant Colonel Pappas served as Executive Officer of VMFA(AW)-332 and then Executive officer of Weapons and Field Training Battalion, MCRD Parris Island.

He served as Commanding Officer of VMFA(AW)-242, the Marine Corps only permanently forward deployed FA-18 squadron, from January 2009 until June 2010 in MCAS Iwakuni, Japan. Following command, he transferred to Ft McNair, Washington DC for study at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces where he graduated with a Master of Science degree in National Resource Strategy.

Following graduation, he served on the Joint Staff with the directorate for Joint Force Development and served as Chief, Joint Lessons Learned Division where he assumed his current rank. From August 2013 until July 2016, Colonel Pappas served as Commanding Officer of Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point. Following command, he transferred to his current role as chief of staff for Marine Corps Combat Development Command and Executive Assistant to Deputy Commandant, Combat Development and Integration.

Colonel Pappas' personal achievements and decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal Strike/Flight Award with bronze numeral five, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with combat V and three gold stars, the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, over 2200 Hornet hours and the designation as a Weapons and Tactics Instructor.