

**19. Captain Steven Franklin Firks, USN 11/26/1996 – 9/11/1998**



Steven Firks was born in Crawfordsville, Indiana, attended Mollie E. Ray Elementary School in Pine Hills, Florida, and Hazelwood Junior and Senior High Schools in Florissant Missouri, graduating in 1970. He then attended the U.S. Naval Academy, graduating in June 1974.

Steve earned a Bachelor's Degree in General Engineering from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1974, a Master's Degree in Aeronautical Engineering from the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School in 1986 and he earned nuclear operator and supervisory qualifications in U.S. Navy Nuclear Power School in 1994.

Following graduation from the Naval Academy, Steve attended flight training, and was assigned to fly the A-7E Corsair II, deploying to the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean with the VA-146 Blue Diamonds in USS Constellation (CV-64), CVW-2 in USS Ranger (CV-61) and VA-97 Warhawks in USS Carl Vinson (CVN-70). Following a tour in Fallon, Nevada flying the F-5E Tiger II and A-4F Skyhawk as an adversary pilot, he transitioned to the F/A-18 Hornet and made combat deployments for Operations Desert Storm and Southern Watch with the VFA-195 Dambusters aboard USS Midway(CV-41) and USS Independence (CV-62), including 32 combat missions into Iraq and Kuwait in support of Operation Desert Storm. He then attended U.S. Navy Nuclear Power School and in 1995 was assigned as the Executive Officer in USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN-71), supporting combat operations in Bosnia.

He commanded USS Seattle (AOE-3) from 1996 to 1998, deploying to the Arabian Gulf with the USS George Washington Battle Group. Following a short assignment as the Joint Operations Officer on Commander Second Fleet staff, Steve commanded the nuclear aircraft carrier USS Nimitz (CVN-68) from 1999 to 2002, leading the crew through the first nuclear refueling of a Nimitz class aircraft carrier and homeport change from Newport News, Virginia to San Diego, California. His last assignment in the Navy was in Colorado Springs, Colorado where he served as the Vice Director of Plans in U.S. Space Command and as the first Division Chief for Ballistic Missile Defense in U.S. Northern Command.

Capt. Firks joined the Missile Defense Agency in July 2004 after 30 years' service in the United States Navy. Steve established the Ballistic Missile Defense System Watch Officer (BWO) team, which has grown to become a vital source of information for MDA Senior Leadership, and a centerpiece of MDA's around the clock support to Warfighters who defend the nation from ballistic missile attack. He currently leads Warfighter Strategic Integration in Colorado Springs, with responsibilities for the MDA

Operations Support Center, BMDS Asset Management, Operational Readiness Reporting and BMDS Strategic planning support.

His Military Awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit (two Awards), the Meritorious Service Medal (two Awards), the Air Medal (one Award for Valor, two Meritorious), the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (one Award for Valor, two Meritorious), as well as other command and unit awards. Steve was the third recipient of the annually awarded Missile Defense Agency Star Award in May, 2007.

Capt. Firks is married to the former Susan Taylor of Florissant, Missouri. They have been blessed with three children, Catherine, Jeffrey and Timothy, and six grandchildren, Kristen, Allison, Owen, Benjamin, Kaylee and Lauren.

Capt. Firks was the guest speaker at USSSVA's 2015 reunion in Branson, MO.