



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Liz Krueger

## Jonathan de Sola Mendes

LIZ KRUEGER May 18, 2012



Colonel

Colonel Jonathan de Sola Mendes

**Award:** Honoring Our Veterans

**Year:** 2012

Colonel Jonathan de Sola Mendes has led both a military career and life of admirable accomplishment. Immediately following graduation from Dartmouth College in May of 1943, Colonel Jonathan de Sola Mendes volunteered for naval flight training. By September of 1943, then as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps, Colonel Mendes was sent to Wallis Island for five months and then to Engebi Island. After 13 months in the Pacific and having flown over 100 missions, Colonel Mendes received two Air Medals for his service overseas.

After returning to the U.S. in October of 1944, Colonel Mendes received formal Marine Corps training by attending and graduating from Marine-Air Infantry School at Quantico, Virginia. Colonel Mendes was released from active duty in the Autumn of 1945. He then enrolled in Harvard Business School in February of 1946 during which time he continued to fly with in the Marine Reserves on weekends. After graduation he transferred to VMF-132 at NAS, Brooklyn where he continued to pilot F6F Hellcats.

In September of 1951, VMF-132 was activated for the Korean War, and by then a Major, Colonel Mendes spent the next year as operations officer of VMFT-20, the fighter refresher training and jet checkout squadron at MCAS, Cherry Point where both Major John Glenn and Captain Ted Williams went through training. In February 1953, Colonel Mendes joined them in BMF-311, MAG-33, Flying F9F Panther jets in K-3, Pohang, Korea.

During his time in Pohang, Colonel Mendes flew 70 missions including leading the last Marine Corps mission of the war. He was awarded an additional 8 Air Medals including the Distinguished Flying Cross.

After the Korean War, Colonel Mendes rejoined his old Reserve squadron, and in time became commanding officer. From 1958 to 1973 Colonel Mendes served as a staff officer before retiring as a Colonel with 30 years of continuous service.

Colonel Mendes has continued to be an active member of his community, and in 2010 was the oldest entrant in the New York City Marathon.