

Contributed by Wolfgang Hechler



Captain Leo Michael Pivonka was born in La Crosse, Kansas on 23 May 1940. He graduated from the University of Kansas in 1962 with a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Mathematics and in 1964 received his commission from the Naval Officer Candidate School, Newport, Rhode Island.

His first assignment was Damage Control Assistant and Main Propulsion Assistant aboard USS COLAHAN (DD 658), homeported in Long Beach, California. Upon decommissioning of USS COLAHAN in May 1965, he reported to USS CHICAGO (CG 11 ) where he served as Repair Officer during operations in the Eastern Pacific and the Gulf of Tonkin off the coast of Vietnam. From 1967 to 1969 he attended the Naval Postgraduate School, in Monterey, California where he graduated with honors with a Masters Degree in Computer Sciences.

In 1970, after completing a tour as Automatic Data Processing Officer on the Staff of Commander, Naval Forces Vietnam, Captain Pivonka was assigned as a Computer Systems Analyst at the Naval Command Systems Support Activity, Washington, DC. Captain Pivonka served as Aide and Flag Secretary to Commander, Naval Surface Group, Western Pacific in Sasebo, Japan and Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines from 1974 to 1976. Subsequently he completed a tour as First Lieutenant in USS MILWAUKEE (AOR 2) which was homeported in Norfolk, Virginia and deployed to the Mediterranean Sea and to Northern Europe.

After a tour as Director of the Fleet Support Division of the Navy Regional Data Automation Center Norfolk, he reported in August 1980 as Executive Officer of USS MARS (AFS 1) which was deployed to the Indian Ocean. He was relieved as Executive Officer of USS MARS in April 1982 after completing a second deployment to the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean. In December 1982, Captain Pivonka assumed command of USS KISKA (AE 35) which underwent overhaul during most of 1983. After conducting operations in the Eastern Pacific, Captain Pivonka deployed to the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean where USS KISKA provided services in support of Battle Group CHARLIE. Captain Pivonka served in Subic Bay, Republic of the Philippines as Chief of Staff, Commander Naval Surface Group, Western Pacific: Commander Logistic Support Force Seventh Fleet: Commander Surface Combatant Forces Seventh Fleet from December 1985 until July 1987. After a brief tour in Command of USS SAN JOSE (AFS 7) he became Deputy Director of Department of the Navy Information Resources Management in November 1987. He took command of USS KANSAS CITY (AOR 3) in January 1989.

His awards include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Commendation Medal with gold star and Combat V, as well as several unit, campaign and service awards. Captain Pivonka is married to the former Gretchen Ann Hedegard of Modesto, California. They reside with their two sons Nicholas and Christopher in Alameda, California. ”