

CAPT SAMUEL PETKO | USMC

// C-130J “Fat Albert” Pilot

Captain Samuel Petko is a native of Osceola, Indiana. He graduated from Penn High School in 2009, where he wrestled and played rugby. After high school, he attended Indiana University, graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. In 2016, he earned his commission as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps through Officer Candidate School and reported to The Basic School aboard Marine Corps Base Quantico, Virginia.

Samuel reported to Naval Air Station (NAS) Pensacola, Florida, to begin aviation indoctrination in September 2016. Following, he completed Primary flight training in the T-6B Texan II with VT-28. Samuel selected the KC-130J as his fleet platform and completed advanced flight training in the T-44C Pegasus while assigned to VT-31 at NAS Corpus Christi. He earned his Naval Aviator wings of gold May 2018. Samuel then reported to the Fleet Replacement Detachment East at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Cherry Point, North Carolina, for initial training and qualification as a KC-130J pilot.

Following the completion of training, Samuel reported to Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 152 “Sumos” at MCAS Iwakuni, Japan, where he served as the Adjutant, Airframes Officer in Charge (OIC), and Flight Duty Officer. He was deployed to several countries throughout the Pacific and Southeast Asia and eventually served as the OIC of the exercise Valiant Shield 2022.

Samuel joined the Blue Angels in 2022. He has accumulated more than 1,500 flight hours and multiple instructor qualifications over the course of multiple joint, bilateral and multilateral exercises in the USINDOPACOM area of responsibility. His decorations include the Humanitarian Service Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, and various personal and service support medals.