



## LETTER TO DRAGON FAMILIES

Dragon Families:

Congratulations on your assignment to our squadron, VMM-265. My wife Julie and I extend to you our sincerest welcome to the Dragon family and the island of Okinawa, Japan. Our first duty with the FMF (Fleet Marine Forces) was in fact with HMM-265; the original CH-46 helicopter squadron that preceded VMM-265.

Being stationed in Okinawa, Japan is an experience like no other. Okinawa is often referred to as the jewel of the Pacific; the ocean water is crystal clear, the weather is temperate most of the year, and the locals are gracious hosts. You will be hard pressed to find a safer environment to have children. Just about anything you might want to do or see is within an hour car ride, and you can usually see either the Pacific Ocean or South China Sea from just about any vantage point. For those that like to "get away" from the hustle of base life/civilization, the island offers countless opportunities for hiking, camping, empty and/or secluded beaches, and a tropical variety of wildlife to discover.

The services on base are as diverse as the wilderness of the northern area jungles. Both DoDDS (Department of Defense Dependent Schools) and MCCS (Marine Corps Community Services) offer a wide range of athletic and extra-curricular activities for children of all ages. Cross-cultural opportunities abound for every imaginable interest. The squadron hosts several social events throughout the year, and many more informal family activities. There is always something to do on this island. We join the Marine Corps to see the world, and Okinawa is one of the best jumping off points to realize this dream.

Make no mistake about it; we are an operational, flying squadron. Sometimes we will work long hours. We are truly forward-deployed and can be tasked with responding to a myriad of humanitarian, disaster relief, or operational missions with very little lead time. I am ultimately responsible for your readiness, but I will charge you with being individually prepared for these inevitable challenges. Because of the close proximity of most of the bases, personally enriching classes and workshops are always within reach. There are many support agencies and organizations that are available to you, for free, to aid in getting you better prepared to thrive during the challenges of being part of this squadron. Our FRO (Family Readiness Officer), Kevin Lathrop, is my liaison for all matters readiness-related. He is a resource for every Marine, Sailor, and family member that is part of our squadron. He is available to ensure that you and your family have a successful tour here. You can reach him at the office (636-7666), by cellphone (0802-703-9029), email, eMarine or Facebook.

My intent is for you to have lifelong, positive memories of your stay with this unit while in Okinawa, Japan.

Semper Fidelis



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C. M. Murray