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TALON TIMES

UNIT PERSONAL AND FAMILY READINESS PROGRAM

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

UPFRP MISSION

The Unit, Personal and Family Readiness Program (UPFRP) is a command-sponsored initiative designed to provide Marines, Sailors, and their families with the resources, training, and support to help navigate the challenges of military life. By fostering personal and family resilience, the UPFRP enhances unit readiness and allows service members to maintain focus on their operational missions.

Command Deck

Commanding Officer



Col. Michael A. Blejski

Executive Officer



Maj. Joshua B. Soltan

Sergeant Major



Sgt. Maj. Christopher L. Rivera



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UPFRP COMMAND TEAM

The Command Team supports service members and their families through four core tenets: (1) official communication, (2) readiness and deployment support, (3) information and resource referrals, and (4) volunteer management.

Commanding Officer

Col. Michael Blejski
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Executive Officer

Maj. Joshua Soltan
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Command Senior Enlisted Leader

Sgt. Maj. Christopher Rivera
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Chaplain

Cmdr. Matthew Harris
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Uniformed Readiness Coordinator (URC)

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LT. COL. MICHAEL MANNA



To the Marines, Sailors, and civilians of MAG-24,

I want to express my deepest gratitude for the privilege of serving alongside you. Having had the opportunity to serve as both your Operations Officer and your Executive Officer since arriving in July 2024, I have been continually humbled by the professionalism, resilience, and tactical excellence you bring to the Group every single day.

Whether we were executing complex exercises, gearing up for operational deployments, or managing the fast-paced demands of our headquarters, your steadfast commitment to the mission has been the foundation of our success. Every day, you are moving mountains one rock at a time- you are making a difference.

It has been a true honor to be a part of MAG-24, and I wish each of you fair winds, following seas, and continued success in the future.

- Lieutenant Colonel Michael Manna



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MAJ. JOSHUA B. SOLTAN



To the Marines, Sailors, civilians, contractors, families, and friends of MAG-24,

Having flown with VMGR-153 "Hercules," I already feel like a proud member of the MAG-24 family. I am honored to step into the role of Executive Officer and look forward to building upon the stellar foundation laid by my predecessors.

The legacy and reputation that MAG-24 has established across the Pacific Area of Responsibility is something we should all be incredibly proud of. From Darwin to Alaska, and Okinawa to the West Coast, we support a massive area of operations. Having previously served as both the Maintenance Officer and XO at VMGR-153, I am eager to continue learning alongside the incredible professionals who make this MAG great. The high operational tempo and the vital support we provide to the local Marine Littoral Regiment (MLR) and the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW) make every single one of us—and the families who support us—absolutely essential. We must remain ready for when the Pacific comes calling, a day that may arrive sooner rather than later.

I remain humbly your servant, and I am truly looking forward to getting to know you and the families you hold dear. As you read through this quarter's updates, I want to remind everyone to take time to enjoy our beautiful Hawaiian paradise this summer. Make the most of every weekend and opportunity together. Our deployment tempo is a constant reminder of how precious our downtime truly is.

Although MAG-24 may be small in footprint, we punch well above our weight, rising to meet every challenge with vigor, character, and strength of heart. True leadership means tapping into your inner strength, but never keeping it to yourself—always look to your left and right to see how you can support your teammate.

Cheers to everything we have accomplished together, and to the vital work ahead. Let's get after it!

-Major Joshua Soltan



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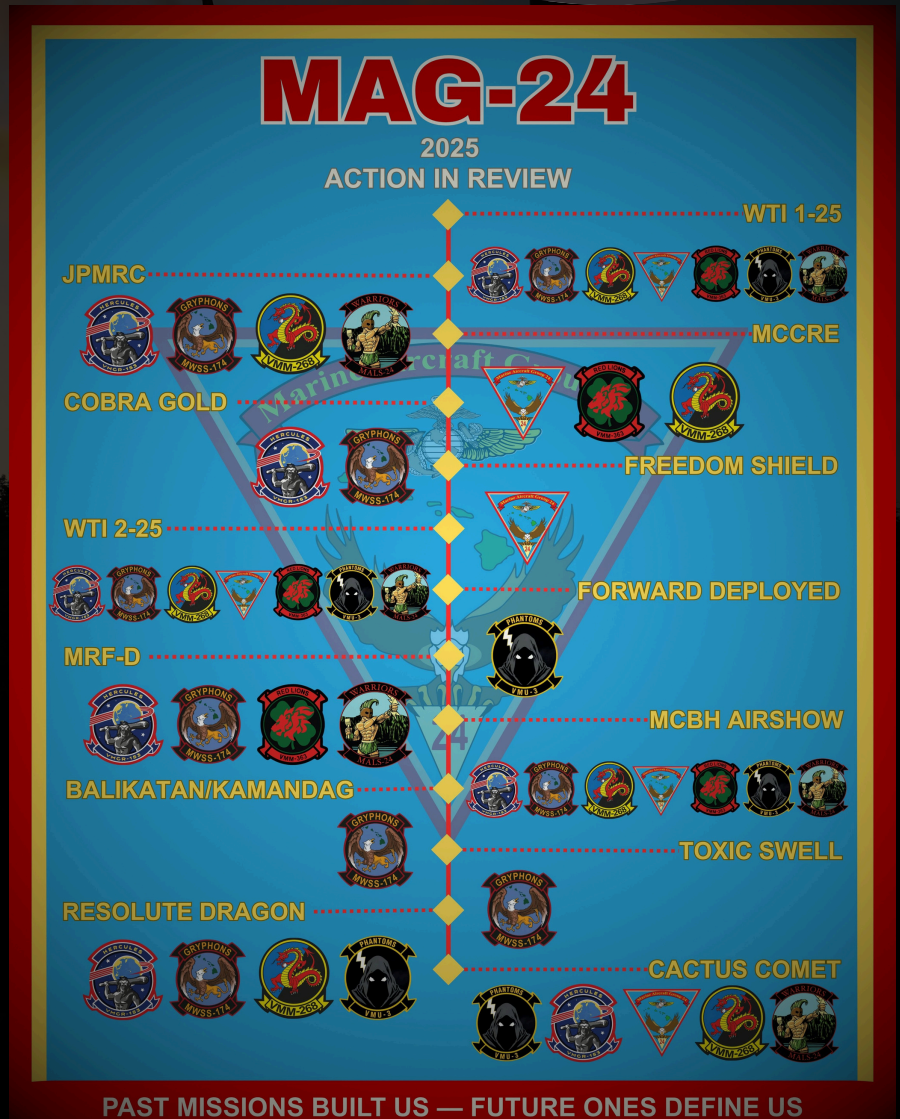
PAST MISSIONS BUILT US



As a Marine or Sailor of MAG-24 PSD, you enable exercises and operations throughout the Indo-Pacific Region, but you don't always get to see the impact of your efforts firsthand.

The poster to the right illustrates the exercises and operations that MAG-24 PSD Marines, Sailors and civilians made possible in 2025.

None of this would be possible without the effort that you put in on a daily basis. Thank you for your hard work and determination.





EXERCISE BRIGHT HORIZON

FORT WORTH NAVAL AIR STATION JOINT RESERVE BASE, TEXAS — From Jan. 29 to Feb. 17, fifty-nine Marines and two KC-130J aircraft assigned to Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron (VMGR) 153 deployed to Texas for exercise Bright Horizon. The Detachment for Training (DFT) had one clear purpose: strengthen combat readiness away from home station and prepare the squadron for full operational capability.

The DFT focused on improving aircrew progression, advancing maintenance training, and operating in a simulated contested environment. Crews executed aerial refueling, tactical navigation, assault landing zone operations, air delivery, battlefield illumination, threat reaction drills, and aviation delivered ground refueling, both day and night. Large division flights practiced mass aerial delivery to sharpen leadership and resupply capabilities.

Maj. Joshua Soltan, executive officer of VMGR-153, emphasized the importance of training away from home. “This is a true ‘practice as you fight’ environment,” he said. “Operating outside of Hawai‘i forces us to adapt, rely on each other, and execute without the comfort of our normal support systems.”

Training under realistic threat conditions, Marines practiced light discipline at night, secure communications, anti-drone awareness, and indirect fire drills. They also operated in mission oriented protective posture gear to simulate working under a chemical attack.

“This wasn’t just about flying hours,” Soltan explained. “It was about integrating ground and air operations in a ‘Road to War’ scenario and preparing our Marines for modern threats.”

The training was especially valuable because it replicated distributed aviation operations, something not easily achieved in Hawai‘i. Specialized ranges allowed for terrain-following and large-scale delivery exercises that cannot be duplicated at home station.

The detachment was highly successful, achieving all primary objectives and seizing additional training opportunities. VMGR-153 even supported nearby units that were conducting their Marine Corps Combat Readiness Evaluations.

As experienced Marines transition out of service, exercises like Bright Horizon are critical for passing knowledge to the next generation. “We’re building confidence and self-reliance in our Marines,” Soltan said. “That’s what strengthens the squadron and the Marine Corps.”

VMGR-153 is a versatile medium-lift, fixed-wing, tactical aircraft squadron that provides air-to-air refueling, assault support, close air support, and multi-sensor imagery reconnaissance, to extend the operational reach and endurance of the Marine Air Ground Task Force. When the squadron returned home, it did so more capable, more confident, and closer to full operational capability.

U.S. Marine Corps article by Cpl. Anabelle Reed-O’brien







MWSS-174 MCCRE DURING KMEP 26.1

KUNSAN AIR BASE, Jeollabuk-do, South Korea — March 14 to April 19, 2026, Marine Wing Support Squadron 174, Marine Aircraft Group 24, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, III Marine Expeditionary Force, validated its ability to project power and integrate with allied forces in the Indo-Pacific. The squadron achieved this milestone by completing a Marine Corps combat readiness evaluation during Korean Marine Exchange Program 26.1.

A formal assessment designed to test a unit's ability to perform its core mission-essential tasks in a simulated combat environment, the MCCRE evaluated the squadron's capacity to conduct distributed, minimal-signature aviation ground support operations, such as refueling and rearming aircraft. Executing these operations during KMEP 26.1 strengthened interoperability with Republic of Korea Marines, directly enhancing readiness throughout the region.

"Like the Gryphon on our patch, MWSS-174 enables operations in the air and on the ground," said Maj. Kevin Kayser, operations officer of MWSS-174. "We provide the 'teeth and talons' that keep the Wing in the fight."

Integration with host-nation partners was a cornerstone of the training, particularly during forward arming and refueling point operations. Working alongside Republic of Korea Marines, the squadron established mobile sites to quickly refuel and rearm aircraft in austere environments. These operations were bolstered by intensive firefighting drills, where teams practiced coordinated responses to simulated aircraft mishaps and structural fires to ensure continuous airfield safety.

Alongside airfield operations, the squadron prioritized life-saving measures through a comprehensive mass casualty exercise. This high-pressure drill tested the Marines' and Sailors' ability to provide immediate medical triage and evacuation under simulated combat conditions, ensuring the unit can maintain personnel readiness during large-scale incidents.

Furthermore, the squadron demonstrated its technical engineering expertise through base recovery after attack and airfield damage repair protocols. These maneuvers involve rapidly patching, leveling, and clearing runways following a simulated strike to ensure flight operations can resume without delay. Complemented by airfield construction and survey assessments, these engineering feats proved the squadron's ability to quickly transform damaged or undeveloped surfaces into viable landing zones.

Integrating airfield damage repair protocols across different military branches provided a subtle but critical validation of the unit's training. The ability to work seamlessly alongside Republic of Korea Marines and other United States military services ensures that aviation support remains uninterrupted.

"When the mission is on the line, we speak the same language as our fellow services to get the job done," said Kayser. "With the successful completion of our MCCRE and KMEP 26.1, we have validated our ability to move forward, integrate with our allies, and provide 1st MAW and III MEF a lethal, expeditionary capability."

While the evaluation was a success, the mindset of the squadron remains focused on future challenges.

"My guidance to the squadron is simple: Do not lose the edge. Stay disciplined in the basics. Continue to build cohesive teams, and remain mentally agile," said Lt. Col. John Fulton, commanding officer of MWSS-174. "The future fight will be dynamic, but if we maintain this level of warfighting professionalism and commitment, Marine Wing Support Squadron 174 will be ready."

The successful completion of this evaluation marks a new chapter of readiness for MWSS-174. From the high-stakes pressure of mass casualty drills to the technical precision of airfield construction, the squadron validated its ability to extend the operational reach and endurance of MAG-24, 1st MAW, and joint expeditionary aviation operations.

U.S. Marine Corps article by Lance Cpl. Chandler Evans







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AWARDS & PROMOTIONS

CONGRATULATIONS!



AWARDS

Navy & Marine Corps Commendation Medal

- Capt. Fordham, Randolph
- SSgt. Ashline, Tyson

Navy & Marine Corps Achievement Medal

- 1st Lt. Adcock, Joseph
- 1st Lt. Widman, Jonah
- GySgt. Salcido, Crystal
- SSgt. Hartmann, Zane
- Sgt. Gutierrez-Silva, Morgan
- Cpl. Rios, Eunice

PROMOTIONS

- Capt. Maud, Dylan
- 1st Lt. Adcock, Joseph
- 1st Lt. Bierman, Maelynn
- MGySgt. Falk, Matthew
- Cpl. Hernandezsalgado, Marbin
- Cpl. Ithau, Ashley
- Cpl. Kane, Lamine
- Cpl. Rios, Eunice
- LCpl. Guillen, Victoria
- LCpl. Sangpasansouk, Toby
- LCpl. Valencia, Camila





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HAIL & FAREWELL

WELCOME

Maj. Soltan, Joshua
 Capt. Deluca, Devin
 Capt. Williams, Trevahn
 Capt. Wetzel, Mary
 1st Lt. Jasso, Anthony
 1st Lt. Perez, Jose
 2nd Lt. Mowery, Sydney
 GySgt. Matos, Juan
 SSgt. Wilson, Marquise
 Sgt. Carrol, Jillian
 Cpl. Silvis, Raheem
 Cpl. Ramirez, Alejandro
 LCpl. Rosales, Aguilar
 LCpl. Svec, Addison
 LCpl. Valencia, Camila
 LCpl. Guillen, Victoria
 Pfc. Gonzalezguzman, Leonardo
 Pfc. Montoya, Nathaniel
 Pfc. Holland, William



FAREWELL

Lt. Col. Manna, Michael
 Lt. Col. Jones, Corey
 Cmdr. Harris, Mathew
 Cmdr. Knight, Sheldon
 Capt. Fordham, Randolph
 1st Lt. Widman, Jonah
 MGySgt. Falk, Matthew
 SSgt. Ashline, Tyson
 SSgt. Hartmann, Zane
 SSgt. Loughlin, Ryan
 Cpl. Risner, Kayla





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FUTURE MISSIONS DEFINE US

Upcoming Recreational Events 2026

- 10 June-Father's Day BBQ at MAG-24 HQ
- 3 July-MCCS HeatWave Concert
- 24 July-Summer Bash

FUTURE OPERATIONS

2026

WTI 1-26

JPMRC

FREEDOM FLAG

CACTUS COMET

STEEL KNIGHT

COBRA GOLD

FREEDOM SHIELD

WTI 2-26

BALIKATAN

MRF-D

SLTE

PACIFIC SENTRY

KAMANDOG

VALIANT SHIELD

RIMPAC





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MCBH RESOURCE DIRECTORY

- **AMERICAN RED CROSS - 808-734-2101**
- **ARMED SERVICES YMCA - 808-254-4719**
- **BASE CHAPEL - 808-496-5138**
- **BASE LEGAL - 808-496-1829**
- **BASE LIBRARY - 808-496-7624**
- **BASE RE-USE ROOM - 808-496-9913**
- **COMMUNITY COUNSELING CENTER - 808-496-7780**
- **EDUCATION CENTER - 808-496-2158**
- **EXCEPTIONAL FAMILY MEMBER PROGRAM - 808-496-0290**
- **FAMILY ADVOCACY PROGRAM - 808-496-7780**
- **FAMILY MEMBER EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM - 808-496-2653**
- **FOCUS - 808-257-7774**
- **INFO, REFERRAL, RELOCATION - 808-496-7786**
- **INFORMATION, TICKETS & TOURS - 808-496-4832**
- **INSTALLATION VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR - 808-496-8848**
- **MARINE CORPS FAMILY TEAM BUILDING - 808-496-2650**
- **MILITARY ONESOURCE - 800-342-9647**
- **NAVY MARINE CORPS RELIEF SOCIETY - 808-496-1972**
- **NEW PARENT SUPPORT PROGRAM - 808-496-7780**
- **PERSONAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT PROGRAM - 808-496-7783**
- **SCHOOL LIASON OFFICER - 808-496-2019**
- **WIC - 808-233-5470**





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ULUPAU CRATER HIKE

