

PHANTOM NEWS



Lieutenant Colonel Ban
Commanding Officer

A MESSAGE FROM THE VMU-3 CO

Aloha Phantom Ohana,

I hope you are all faring well during these difficult times. I ask that you stay positive and continue to help each other out. Things are getting better and they will continue to get better. Understand, though, that our lives may not go back to the way they were before the pandemic for a very long time. We'll just have to adapt and overcome, as we always do!

Your Marines will continue to come to work on a regular basis unless there is a drastic change in the threat. We are taking every precaution necessary to prevent transmission of COVID-19, to keep your Marines healthy, and to maintain their morale. We believe it is mentally, emotionally, and spiritually healthier for them to keep their daily schedule as normal as possible. Of course, we also have an obligation to be ready to support with whatever our nation needs from us. This is particularly important right now.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

SgtMaj/URC	2
Intel/Operations	3
Logistics/Comm	4
Maintenance	5
Volunteers	5
Congratulations	6

We have a bit of good news, though we remain cautiously optimistic about it. It looks like the Marines who were supposed to deploy to Australia to support Marine Rotational Force – Darwin (MRF-D) will deploy to Australia after all. The timeline and the exercise itself will be modified to account for COVID-19 mitigations. This could all change based on the global situation, but for now, we are a go.

We're exploring an opportunity to have a small detachment support Valiant Shield in Guam in September. That may not be a normal RQ-21A Blackjack deployment though. Details are to be determined as we're still early in the planning phase. We do expect to support the next Weapons and Tactics Instructor course in Sep-Oct, same as we did last year. We'll send a detachment of about 25 Marines to Yuma, AZ, for that. Also, you may have heard of the Commandant of the Marine Corps' Force Design initiative. There will be many necessary and wonderful changes coming to the Marine Corps. Though we will be better for it, we will experience the unavoidable chaos and growing pains associated with change.

There are still a lot of unknowns and uncertainties, so remain flexible. Know that we are doing, and will continue to do, our best to try to minimize the chaos for you and your Marines.

Finally, this is the last newsletter I will address to you as the Commanding Officer. I will turn over command to LtCol Thomas "BOF" Farrington on 12 Jun 2020. He is an outstanding officer, and I think you will all enjoy and appreciate his leadership.

Kaz, Colorado, and I will truly miss you all. I have never in my life had more fun than having been a Phantom for the past two years. I appreciate the support and hard work from everyone. You and your Marines are the best examples of what it means to be an American. It has been my honor to serve with you. Mahalo!

Mahalo and Semper Fidelis,
Fizz
LtCol Peter "Fizz" Ban



VMU-3 Sergeant Major



I hope everyone is doing well and staying safe during these trying times.

As many of you are aware, Sergeant Major AJ Ramos and I had our relief and appointment on March 3rd. The Marines of VMU-3 prepared and executed a beautiful ceremony. I know firsthand the amount of hours that go into the preparation, the suffering of having to stand in formation, in the heat with what felt like 100% humidity. The Commander of Troops was soaked in sweat and looked as if he just completed his swim qualification. Both of our families are incredibly grateful, and thank you for a job well done.

My wife Jeanette, and sons, Jonathan (13) and Anthony (11) arrived on the island on March 1st. We brought along our fur babies (French Bulldogs), Sophie and Max. When I'm not slaving away behind my computer, you can find me spending time with the family exploring this beautiful island together, (while adhering to the COVID-19 ROM, of course).

I am genuinely impressed with the Marine's professionalism and dedication to mission accomplishment. This is a reflection of the squadron's leadership. I am amazed by the amount of responsibility we put on these young Marines. An M-16 was my only responsibility growing up in the Marine Corps, and that at times posed some challenges.

Upon receipt of orders, I read about the unit and the unit's mission as much as possible. I was instantly taken back to previous deployments in Afghanistan, where I was the recipient of these capabilities. Your Marines provide the grunts on the ground the ability to see what threats lie ahead and to their flanks allowing the commanders to make well-informed decisions. Your Marines provide a blanket of comfort. And for those reasons, I am honored to serve the Marines of VMU-3.

VMU-3 Uniformed Readiness Coordinator



Aloha ladies and gentlemen! I hope that everyone has been safe and taking this time to be effective and come together (though not physically—social distance!). The times have been strange but VMU-3 has been strong at work and pushing forward to deploy and get opportunities to be Phantoms!

During these strange times, it is important for everyone to be vigilant for anything that can harm you and your family. A good rule of thumb is that the word you receive can be treated as official when the email or website ends in “.gov” or “.mil”. If you need assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out to myself or anyone on the Command Team for help. We are here for you.

Our Marines are looking forward to going to Guam, Australia, and back to WTI in Arizona. Please be in contact with your Marines, as well we will be in contact with you, to find the most up-to-date information on where and when your Marines will be going. As a reminder, please do not post dates and locations on public forums such as Facebook or Instagram—doing so can jeopardize their missions and force date changes to occur.

Speaking of events, future events are always thought of and there are many currently on the drawing board. As we discuss future events we are always open to suggestions as to what could bring the Phantom Ohana together. Everyone should remember, the Marine Corps Ball is planned to be on November 13, 2020 so start saving up now! It's always an amazing opportunity to be together as an Ohana.

Please let me know if you and your family need additional information or resources, I am excited to be working with you all! Mahalo! My point of contact is: 808-257-4275 or at johan.maree@usmc.mil



S-2 Intelligence

In the Intelligence Section, we are hard at work preparing for the year's upcoming deployments. In support to MRF-D (Marine Rotational Force Darwin), we are excited to have had three of our Marines CHOP over to VMU-268. They leave later this year for Australia to provide valuable expertise and proficient imagery and intelligence analysis support during joint exercises and operations. Additionally, we have three Marines ready to head out the door to the next iteration of WTI. As before, they will be located with the squadron, providing the typical first-class levels of intelligence support. We will be providing one of our 0241 Marines, as an additional augment in support to MAWTS as well during WTI.

The S-2 continues to work hard ensuring that all Marines are fully trained and prepared to support the multitude of requirements being placed upon the squadron this year. Our Intelligence Marines were provided an outstanding training opportunity in February with the Camouflage Netting Study (CNS) that took place. Our Marines supported 24-hour flight operations over the course of the study and conducted PED for hours of video and dozens of images. These imagery products were provided to the U.S. Naval Research Laboratory and we were told that future research and development will be directly impacted by the material that VMU-3 collected during this study. In addition to this event, the Marines continue to support weekly flight operations while concurrently conducting internal imagery analysis and FMV training. As well, our Marines keep themselves thoroughly engaged by creating and conducting monthly squadron Intelligence Briefings focused on current events, AOR specific topics, and various assorted topics related to the squadron and its mission.

Marines of the S-2 took advantage of the remaining limited operational white-space to work on their PME. During this period, Sgt Charite successfully completed the Sgt School Seminar program. As well, GySgt Ascione successfully completed the Advanced School Seminar program. Sgt Taylor and Sgt Wuerschmidt graduated from Sgt School (Resident) in early February. Two of our recently promoted SSgts, SSgt Pena and SSgt Vossler, are enrolled in the current iteration of the Career School Seminar program that began in mid-February.

Lastly, the Intelligence Section was happy to welcome into its ranks Sgt Mitchell Schaefer. He joins us from 1st Marine Division out of Camp Pendleton has already shown himself to be a motivated and capable addition to the S-2. Sadly, we had to say goodbye to one of our own, Sgt Wuerschmidt. Sgt Wuerschmidt's presence was noted when he was here and his absence is noted now that he is gone. He left us for the 3d Marines and we have no doubts that he will continue providing the high quality intelligence analysis and unparalleled motivation that he is known for (as well as his marvelous hair).



S-3 Operations

During the 2nd quarter of FY20, all VMU-3 Marines received their annual Back in the Saddle (BITS) training at the MCBH bowling alley to kick off the New Year. This is where the squadron discussed road safety with the Honolulu Police Department as well as prohibited activities, controlled cryptographic items, water safety, physical security and voter registration. We hosted two MAWTS-1 instructors (Maj Kelly and SSgt Kern) who taught multiple ACAD classes and introduced all the aircrew Marines to the Marine Air Ground Tablet (MAGTAB).

Our Marines conducted a static display of the RQ-21A Blackjack at the Changi Expo Center alongside other members of the U.S. military. Marines were able to share information about the aircraft and its mission in the Marine Corps with spectators and aviation enthusiasts from all over the INDOPACOM region, all while continuing our strong military relationship with the Republic of Singapore.

We successfully supported our first 24 hour operations in support of camouflage netting system assessment where we flew over 60hrs in a period of one week which provided valuable imagery to the testing director. Additionally, we conducted our first Spoke Site aerial insert and operation aboard MCBH with the help from VMU-268. We also welcomed two new Basic Instructor Pilots, Capt Montgomery and GySgt Schrimsher to our instructor cadre, and they will be instructing new AVOs and UACs. Sergeant Bistran returned from the Air Force's Basic Sensor Operator Course at Randolph Air Force Base (AFB) where he received the Distinguished Graduate Award.

End of 2nd quarter of FY20 has been a bit challenging due to COVID-19. A detachment of Marines deployed for training to Yuma, AZ ended up having to return home due to the growing issues of COVID-19. A lot of squadron day to day operations has changed to accommodate the recent enforcement of social distancing. We are doing our best to remain flexible and come out strong post COVID-19.





S-4 Logistics/Supply

It has been an exciting several months for the S-4/Logistics section; we have focused on creating logistics/embarkation plans and preparing our Marines for MRF-D, and the 31st MEU. In addition, the Ground Support Department (GSD) was finally given the “green-light” and moved into our newly renovated facility.

The main training opportunities for the section revolved around supporting VMU-3 flight operations aboard MCBH and preparation for upcoming deployments. In doing so, the Section assisted in the deployment and redeployment of the RQ-21 Blackjack system by conducted convoy missions, security operations, and by providing logistical life support.

The section welcomed Private First Class Moyer, a 3521 Motor Transport Mechanic. In addition, the Ground Support Department welcomed its new division Chief and Motor Transport Operations Chief, GySgt Zamano. In the upcoming months the GSD looks forward to welcoming its new OIC, Capt Phieffer, and it’s new S4 OIC, Capt Lloyd.



S-6 Communications

The communications department has been working hard on both Maintenance and occupational proficiency. We’ve prepared for two different deployments, both the 31st MEU and MRF-D, even sending Marines to Yuma to attend courses at Weapon Tactics Instructor School.

S-6 has also seen one of our own Marines win the meritorious board for promotion to Corporal. Corporal Martinez was selected to be promoted above his peers and has shown to everyone that our S-6 section shoots for nothing

but the highest of standards. Additional promotions during this time include LCpl Medrano and Cpl Danford.

We’ve had one of our Marines give birth to a healthy baby boy. Our S-6 family and Phantom Ohana is proud to say “Aloha!” to Finnigan Matthew Danford.

We have the pleasure of welcoming LCpl Frandle and SSgt Pacheco into our S-6 family. LCpl Frandle is a Radio Technician and SSgt Pacheco will serve as both the transmissions chief and spectrum manager. We are excited to be working with them for many years to come.





Maintenance

The Maintenance Department of VMU-3 has had a very busy beginning to 2020. During the month of January, the Avionics Marines performed a full inventory and transfer inspection of the RQ-21A equipment going to MRF-D with VMM-268. At the same time, the department was preparing for a Commander Naval Air Forces inspection, the most important inspection a Marine aviation squadron goes through. The CNAF inspection ended with the department scoring a 93% overall grade, well above the average grade received by squadrons across the Navy and Marine Corps. At the end of the month of February, VMU-3 maintainers supported 5 days of 24 hour operations in support of a local training event on Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

In March, a detachment of Marines left for WTI at MCAS Yuma, AZ. Unfortunately, due to the threat of COVID-19, this training event was ultimately cancelled and the Marines brought back to Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

We have also seen Marines progressing in their qualifications, with six Marines earning qualifications in the Avionics Division. SSgt Garcia received his Collateral Duty Inspector and Collateral Duty Quality Assurance Representative qualifications. LCpl Pottin earned his Collateral Duty Inspector qualification. Four Marines received their Plane Captain qualification, those Marines are: LCpl Rollan, LCpl Roman, LCpl Trujillo and LCpl Delgado. The Maintenance Department welcomed three new Marines this quarter; Capt Bridgewater will be taking over as the Assistant Aviation Maintenance Officer, Sgt Small will be our Tool Room NCOIC and LCpl Alfrey will be adding more manpower to the Maintenance Admin section. We also bid farewell to three Marines: Capt Torres is on terminal leave and will be honorably discharged, Cpl Cervantes and Cpl Hamlin have returned to their parent unit, MALS-24.



VMU-3 Volunteers

DID YOU KNOW? The President's Volunteer Service Award recognizes, celebrates and holds up as role models Americans making a positive impact as engaged and deeply committed volunteers. The Award enables community organizations—as Certifying and Leadership Organizations—to amplify their gratitude by joining with the President of the United States to thank their most dedicated volunteers. Find out more at www.presidentserviceawards.gov/about. MCBH Hawaii is a certifying official for award hours; the Record of Service Key is BDS-8616.

For more information, contact MCBH Volunteer Coordinator, Estella Euclide at (808) 257-0372 or ESTELLA.EUCLIDE@USMC-MCCS.ORG. The MCBH Facebook Page for base and local volunteer opportunities is www.facebook.com/mcbhvolunteers.

To record volunteer hours for supporting our squadron, use

our Phantoms Volunteer Log at <https://forms.gle/D Ae7s EMYhqEJ7YjM7>



VMU-3 Command Team Advisors
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Phantoms Ohana FB Page:
[@PhantomOhana](https://www.facebook.com/PhantomOhana)



Congradualtions to our Newly Promoted!



SCHUMER, JONATHON
MEDRANO, SERGIO
FREDERICK, JACOB



DANFORD, ELIZABETH
MARTINEZ, REMY



DALEY, JAVION
TUCKER, LARRY



DIERKS, HEATH



ASSIMOS, TRISTAN



CPL ALBERT
NCO OF THE QUARTER

VMU-3 **NCO OF THE QUARTER** **&** **MARINE OF THE QUARTER**



LCPL SCHUMER
MARINE OF THE QUARTER

HOLIDAYS/LOCAL EVENTS

Memorial Day 96
23-26 May

Independence Day 96
2-5 July

Labor Day 96
5-8 September

Columbus Day 96
10-13 October

Veteran's Day 72
10-12 November

Thanksgiving 96
26-29 November

Christmas 96
24-27 December

New Year's 96
31 December - 3 January 2021

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Maj Law 257-3183
SgtMaj Garcia 257-3166

Medical Clinic 257-3365
Animal Clinic 257-3643
Commissary/ID Desk 257-1452
DEERS 257-2077
Family Housing-257-2676
Ohana Housing 839-8700/8710
HR Office-257-0731
Base Legal-257-0074
Fire Station-471-8004

Navy-Marine Corp Relief Society
257-1972
Pass House-257-2047
PMO (Non Emergency) 257-1018
Post Office 257-2008
Red Cross 257-8848
Education Center 257-2158

For more information about the Phantoms, check us out at our:

Website: <http://www.1stmaw.marines.mil/SubordinateUnits/MarineAircraftGroup24/VMU3.aspx>

Official VMU-3 Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/VMUthree

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/VMU3Phantoms>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/vmu3phantoms/>