



Marine Wing Support Squadron – 172

Commanding Officer's Guidance



Our unit exists to provide Aviation Ground Support to MAG-36, 1st Marine Air Wing, and ultimately III Marine Expeditionary Force

Fellow *Firebirds*,

This is an exciting time to be in our Marine Corps and it is not hyperbole to say we are on the tip-of-the-spear and in the backyard geographically of pacing near-peer threats and multiple adversary powers. As our Commandant has made abundantly clear, we are part of the main effort of the joint force as we continue to defend the national interests of the United States. Operating in an Area of Operations that encompasses half the world, we are blessed with a perspective that our CONUS-based colleagues are simply not privy to. What follows is my vision for how we as a team will conduct business, support the flying squadrons we are responsible for, and defend our country.

My priorities and expectations of our unit and each *Firebird*:

1. **We will be a ready unit.** Please do not confuse willingness with readiness. *Being willing to do something is a state of mind but being ready is a fact...either you are ready or you aren't.* If we need to respond on short notice, wanting to defend the nation is different than being able to actually do so. Evolutions like recall drills prove we are prepared at the most basic level. If our gear is not ready, if our equipment is broken, and if our Marine and Sailors are untrained, we will have lost the war before it started. Calling ourselves a 911 Force is merely lip service if we are not actively readying ourselves for conflict.
2. **We will play a team game.** The Marine Corps is a group effort and any success we achieve will not occur due to our acting as lone individuals. Acting as cohesive units that are able to operate in a dispersed manner with the capability of expanding as missions dictate will be our key for victory. I expect small unit leadership to oversee hard, realistic, relevant, and adaptable team-focused training.
3. **We will be brilliant in the basics.** It is imperative that we not ignore the simple things and I expect us to excel in our everyday actions. To use a sports analogy, successful NFL teams spend time perfecting blocking and tackling. A football team that spends all their time working on the fake punt at the expense of simple blocking or fundamental tackling will not see the playoffs very often. For our unit, if we don't know our jobs and are deficient in our Mission Essential Tasks, we are failing not only ourselves but those who are depending on us as well.
4. **We will take care of each other.** The tightest units I have been a part of were those whom I deployed with. Those shared challenges and struggles built a family atmosphere where you truly had to depend on your brother and sister Marines and Sailors on a daily basis. By virtue of our being forward deployed in Okinawa, I see much of the same environment as during those combat deployments. We will take care of each other, know each other's strengths and weaknesses, and be ready to pick each other up when required. Relying on each other will be a strength of our unit and will make us more combat ready.
5. **We will be good neighbors and ambassadors.** We all know the example of the Strategic Corporal...the service member who does something that causes an outsized effect that has implications on the overall effort, often times for the worse. When interacting with our Okinawa hosts, we will abide by the first part of General Mattis' mantra of "No Better Friend". Instances of negligent traffic accidents, drunken tomfoolery, fighting, committing crimes, and other examples of malfeasance does not help our cause and can cause as much harm as anything our adversaries could do. I expect you all to be professional and carry yourselves like Marines are expected to.
6. **We will achieve balance in our lives.** While mission accomplishment receives the preponderance of our attention, balancing personal well-being and taking care of ourselves and our families is also paramount. I understand this is often easier said than done, particularly with evolving COVID-19 realities, but investing in each of our physical, mental, spiritual, and interpersonal well-being will make for a better overall unit. Avoiding burnout while building a sound base personally is key to increasing and sustaining morale. Leave is meant to be taken, programs are there for your use, and family and loved ones are not a burden but an integral part of our success. I expect small unit leadership to leverage those opportunities of recharging batteries when they arise. This contributes to our war footing and readiness posture.

Being a U.S. Marine or Sailor is being a member of the small minority who chose to serve their country as brothers and sisters in arms. The relationships and experiences you develop will last a lifetime...enjoy it and have fun. I am proud to be joining a unit with the reputation and long legacy of superior performance as MWSS-172 and am humbled to now be considered a "*Firebird*". Thank you for what you do every day and I look forward to serving each of you as we continue to achieve new heights.


K. A. MISNER
"Firebird 6"