

Marine Air Control Group 18 Appointment Ceremony



Sergeant Major Hector A. Sanchez



19 August 2025

Camp Foster Okinawa, Japan

**The Commanding Officer
Marine Air Control Group 18
Welcomes you to the
Appointment Ceremony
at which
Sergeant Major Hector A. Sanchez
will assume responsibilities as the
Group Sergeant Major.**

Sequence of Events

Introduction

Invocation by Chaplain

***National Anthem**

Appointment

**Remarks by
Colonel Justin M. Sanders**

**Remarks by
Sergeant Major Hector A. Sanchez**

***Anchors Aweigh**

***Marines' Hymn**

Conclusion

***All personnel in attendance will be asked to stand.**

History of the Grade of Sergeant Major

The rank of Sergeant Major dates back to the 13th century when that title applied to the chief tenant of a knight's military retinue. The rank is peculiar in that it has at various times been applied to Commissioned Officers as well as Noncommissioned Officers.

In the 16th and 17th Centuries, the Sergeant Major was a field officer below the grade of Lieutenant Colonel, equivalent to a Major today, who usually performed duties as the Adjutant. In mid-17th Century in England, under Oliver Cromwell, Sergeant Major was actually a General Officer rank equivalent to today's Major General. From the 18th Century to the present, Sergeant Major has become the title of the highest noncommissioned officer rank.

Whether the grade was that of a commissioned or noncommissioned officer, the responsibilities of the rank have always been those of superintendent over the organization's drill, discipline and administration.

As accurately as may be determined, the Marine Corps first authorized a permanent Sergeant Major on January 1, 1801 and the first Marine to hold that position was Archibald Summers. For a nearly century, until the Spanish American War in 1898, the Corps had only one Sergeant Major billet, which is the origin of today's post of Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps.

During a Change of Command ceremony years ago, a commander described the wide-range impact of the responsibility assigned to the Sergeant Major:

"To the enlisted Marine and Officers as well, the senior noncommissioned officer is both a teacher and keeper of tradition and in this, he binds together all the energies of our Corps."

In the United States Marine Corps, Sergeant Major is the ninth and highest enlisted rank, just above first Sergeant, and equal in grade to Master Gunnery Sergeant, although the two have different responsibilities. Sergeant Major is both a rank and a military billet. Marine Corps Sergeants Major serve as the senior enlisted Marine in the Corps' units of battalion, squadron or higher echelon, as the unit commander's senior enlisted advisor and to handle matters of discipline and morale among the enlisted Marines. Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps is a separate and unique position. The U.S. Marine Corps' first sergeant major was Archibald Sommers, appointed on January 1, 1801. This was originally a solitary post, similar to the modern Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps, but by 1899 there were five Sergeants Major. The title was abolished in 1946, but re-introduced as a rank in 1954. The post of Sergeant Major of the Marine Corps was established in 1957, as the senior enlisted advisor to the Commandant of the Marine Corps.

The Grade of Sergeant Major

The Sergeant Major is, first and foremost, the unit's senior enlisted Marine.

The Sergeant Major is the unit's constant example of military bearing, soldierly excellence, and leadership.

The Sergeant Major is the Commander's eyes and ears on all matters pertaining to enlisted Marines.

The Sergeant Major is the commander's most trusted advisor.

The Sergeant Major is the unit's guardian of Marine Corps history and tradition as embodied in our drill and ceremonies.

The Sergeant Major is the firm, but compassionate, parental figure to all Marines.

The Sergeant Major is the heart and soul of the military organization.



Sergeant Major Hector A. Sanchez

Sergeant Major Sanchez enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in June 2004. Upon completion of recruit training, he reported to Marine Combat Training at Camp Pendleton, California, and subsequently attended follow-on training as a Corrections Specialist at Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, Texas.

His first assignment was at the Base Brig, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. During this tour, he was promoted to the rank of corporal in 2005 and served as the Driver and Protocol Noncommissioned Officer for the Base Commander. Upon returning to the Base Brig, he was promoted to the rank of sergeant and assigned as a Watch Supervisor.

In 2008, Sergeant Major Sanchez reported to Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego, California, to earn the title of Drill Instructor. He served with distinction as a Drill Instructor, Experienced Drill Instructor, and Senior Drill Instructor. Following the successful completion of this special duty assignment in 2011, he was promoted to the rank of staff sergeant.

Later that year, he reported to the Camp Pendleton Base Brig for duty as Duty Brig Supervisor. In 2013, he transferred to 1st Law Enforcement Battalion, serving as the Detainee Operations Staff Noncommissioned Officer and Non-Lethal Weapons Instructor. He deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, serving as Detainee Operations Staff Noncommissioned Officer in Charge.

In 2014, he received orders to Marine Security Guard School, Quantico, Virginia. He graduated in 2015 with distinction, earning recognition as the honor graduate. He went on to serve as the Detachment Commander in Chengdu, China; Monterrey, Mexico; and Ashgabat, Turkmenistan.



In 2018, he reported to Security and Emergency Services Battalion, Camp Pendleton, California, where he served as Corrections Counselor and managed a caseload of high-profile prisoners.

In 2019, he was selected for promotion to first sergeant and assigned to 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, deploying with Headquarters and Service Company in support of Marine Rotational Force-Darwin 2.19. In 2020, he participated in the Southwest Border Mission as First Sergeant for Company A.

In April 2021, he transferred to Company C, as Site Support First Sergeant in Corpus Christi, Texas. He was promoted to his current rank of Sergeant Major in August 2023 and served as the Site Support Sergeant Major for 1st Battalion, 23d Marines, 4th Marine Division.

Sergeant Major Sanchez reported to Marine Aircraft Control Group 18, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing in July 2025, and assumed his current position as the Command Senior Enlisted Leader.

Sergeant Major Sanchez holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. His personal decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal, Combat Action Ribbon, Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, and the Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal.

Marine Air Control Group 18

Sergeants Major

SgtMaj Chevalier
- Aug 1983

SgtMaj Stubblefield
Aug 1983 – Nov 1984

SgtMaj Nottingham
Nov 1984 - Jul 1985

SgtMaj Armstrong
Jul 1982 - May 1986

SgtMaj Henry
May 1986 - Jun 1986

SgtMaj Ore
Jun 1986 - Jun 1987

SgtMaj Celestine
Jun 1987 - Jan 1988

SgtMaj Demory
Jan 1988 - Feb 1990

SgtMaj Henry
Apr 1990 - Jul 1991

SgtMaj Harris
Jul 1991 - Jun 1992

SgtMaj Bronson
Jun 1992 - May 1996

SgtMaj Bowling
May 1996 - Mar 2000

SgtMaj Villa
Jan 2000 - Aug 2000

SgtMaj Jordan
Aug 2000 - Nov 2000

SgtMaj Prado
Nov 2000 - May 2004

SgtMaj Smith
May 2004 - Apr 2006

SgtMaj Adams
Mar 2006 - Jun 2008

SgtMaj Jackson
Jun 2008 - Oct 2009

SgtMaj Eriksson
Oct 2009 - Mar 2011

SgtMaj Wisniewski
Mar 2011 - May 2012

SgtMaj Eggerling
May 2012 - Dec 2013

SgtMaj Gaines
Feb 2014 - Feb 2016

SgtMaj Hyrne
Feb 2016 - June 2016

SgtMaj Cato
Apr 2018 - Jul 2020

SgtMaj Soto
Jul 2020 - Nov 2022

SgtMaj Smith
Dec 2022 - Jun 2025

SgtMaj Sanchez
Aug 2025 -

HONORS AWARDED TO
MARINE AIR CONTROL GROUP 18

PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION STREAMER

VIETNAM

1967

NAVY UNIT COMMENDATION STREAMER

VIETNAM

1967-1968

**MERITORIOUS UNIT COMMENDATION STREAMER WITH FOUR
BRONZE STARS**

1982-1984

1985-1987

1997-1999

2000-2002

2004-2005

AMERICAN CAMPAIGN STREAMER

WORLD WAR II VICTORY STREAMER

**NATIONAL DEFENSE SERVICE STREAMER WITH TWO BRONZE
STARS**

VIETNAM SERVICE STREAMER WITH TWO SILVER STARS

GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM SERVICE STREAMER

VIETNAM CROSS OF GALLANTRY WITH PALM STREAMER

VIETNAM MERITORIOUS UNIT CIVIL ACTIONS STREAMER

LINEAGE OF
MARINE AIR CONTROL GROUP 18

1967 – 1991

REACTIVATED 1 SEPTEMBER 1967 AT DA NANG, REPUBLIC OF VIETNAM,

AS MARINE AIR CONTROL GROUP 18 AND ASSIGNED TO 1ST MARINE AIRCRAFT WING

PARTICIPATED IN THE WAR IN VIETNAM, SEPTEMBER 1967 – APRIL 1971

RELOCATED DURING APRIL 1971 TO IWAKUNI, JAPAN

RELOCATED DURING SEPTEMBER 1975 TO FUTENMA, OKINAWA, JAPAN

ELEMENTS PARTICIPATED IN OPERATION PROVIDE COMFORT, IRAQ MAY 1991

ELEMENTS PARTICIPATED IN OPERATION SEA ANGEL, BANGLADESH, MAY 1991

ELEMENTS PARTICIPATED IN OPERATION FIERY VIGIL, PHILIPPINES, JUNE 1991

1992 – 2017

PARTICIPATED IN OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM, AFGHANISTAN AND UZBEKISTAN,

OCTOBER 2001 – FEBRUARY 2004 AND 2009 – 2010

PARTICIPATED IN HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND DISASTER RELIEF OPERATIONS,

PHILIPPINES, IN RESPONSE TO FLOODING, DECEMBER 2004

LINEAGE OF
MARINE AIR CONTROL GROUP 18

2

**ELEMENTS PARTICIPATED IN SUPPORT OF CARING RE-
SPONSE, MYANMAR,**

MAY – JUNE 2008

**PARTICIPATED IN OPERATION TOMODACHI, JAPAN,
MARCH – APRIL 2011**

**PARTICIPATED IN OPERATION DAMAYAN, PHILIPPINES,
NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2013**

**PARTICIPATED IN OPERATION SAHAYOGI HAAT, NEPAL,
APRIL – MAY 2015**



Marines' Prayer

Almighty father, whose command is over all and whose love Never fails, make me aware of the presence and obedient to thy will. Keep me true to my best self, guarding me against dishonesty in purpose and deed and helping me to live so that I can face my fellow Marines, my love ones, and thee without shame or fear. Protect my family. Give me the will to do the work of a marine and to accept my share of responsibilities with vigor and enthusiasm. Grant me the courage to be proficient in my daily performance. Keep me loyal and faithful to my superiors and to the duties my country and the marine corps have entrusted to me. Make me to wear my uniform with dignity, and let it remind me daily of the traditions which I must uphold. If I am inclined to doubt, steady my faith; if I am tempted, make me strong to resist; if I should miss the mark, give me the courage to try again. Guide me with the light of truth and grant me wisdom by which I may understand the answer to my prayer.

Amen.

The Marines' Hymn

In 1929 the Commandant of the Marine Corps authorized the following verses of The Marines' Hymn as the official version:

*“From the Halls of Montezuma
To the shores of Tripoli;
We fight our country's battles
On the land as on the sea;
First to fight for right and freedom
And to keep our honor clean;
We are proud to claim the title
Of United States Marine.
Our flag's unfurled to every breeze
From dawn to setting sun;
We have fought in every clime and place
Where we could take a gun;
In the snow of far-off Northern lands
And in sunny tropic scenes;
You will find us always on the job
The United States Marines
Here's health to you and to our Corps
Which we are proud to serve;
In many a strife we've fought for life
And never lost our nerve;
If the Army and the Navy
Ever look on Heaven's scenes;
They will find the streets are guarded
By United States Marines.”*



Thank you for Attending

