



VMM-268 Red Dragon Commander's Philosophy

VMM-268 Mission: *To support the MAGTF Commander by providing assault support transport of combat troops, supplies and equipment, day or night, under all weather conditions during expeditionary, joint, or combined operations.*

“Ready and Relevant”

Combat Readiness is our guiding principle— it's the reason this organization exists and the core of our mission statement. As a team, we all have a role that contributes to the growth and success of the squadron. I expect you to learn your role, execute to the best of your ability, and strive to improve yourself and our squadron every day. These three pillars will be our focus to ensure the Red Dragons remain ready and relevant when called upon.

People

People are the heart and soul of this squadron. Operational excellence is achieved by being personally and professionally invested in those we serve. Every member of this team plays a critical role in our success, along with the families that support us. To remain ready we will **emphasize a balanced approach to life**. Family, fitness, education, and personal wellness must all take on proper proportions of our daily lives so we are mentally, physically, and administratively ready to meet our challenges. To ensure unity of effort, we must communicate clearly and ensure we communicate the “why” so Marines, Sailors, and families can take concurrent actions to remain ready.

Ownership

I expect all members of VMM-268 to take ownership of all aspects of their personal and professional life. Furthermore, I expect all leaders to be engaged and active in the mentorship and development of our Marines and Sailors and take ownership and pride in their success. Your individual efforts directly impact your overall technical and tactical proficiency and each member of the team contributes to the combat readiness of the squadron. I trust every member of this squadron to remain disciplined in your efforts to seek self-improvement and remain humble enough to learn from mistakes. I expect members of VMM-268 at all levels to **have a bias for action** to ensure the task at hand is getting the right amount of timely support.

Training

Tough, realistic, aggressive training that is based on a foundation of remaining **brilliant in the basics** is critical to ensuring the squadron remains ready to support when needed and relevant to the changing environment we thrive in. We must ensure quality training is a core component of our professional development for all MOS within the squadron. We are all lifelong learners who can always refine our trade craft a little further and by doing so will raise the bar of performance for the entire squadron.

I am humbled and honored to serve as your Commanding Officer. **You can rest assured that I am dedicated to the service members and families of VMM-268.** Our culture of excellence will ensure we remain responsive to the needs of the joint force to deter enemy aggression and preserve our nation's way of life.

Just Real Players...

Brandon S. Pope

Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps
Commanding Officer

VMM-268 POLICY STATEMENTS



The Red Dragons are privileged to have Marines and Sailors who are the best in the world at what they do. Together, we will foster a mission-oriented climate that provides equal opportunity to excel and advance while remaining a professional organization that is constantly seeking self-improvement.

Safety: Safety is critical to mission success and is never an afterthought to operations. We will have a culture of safety and transparency that is reflected in everything we do. Our goal is zero preventable mishaps. We have a sacred responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of our Marines and Sailors as well as our material assets. At times we must assume risk to accomplish our combat assault support mission, but there is no excuse for lazy or reckless operations. Sometimes we will make mistakes, and when that time comes we will openly acknowledge our shortcomings and learn from our mistakes without fear of retribution.

Sexual Assault: The Red Dragons are a family. We will treat each other as such and regard as paramount the responsibility we have for those under our charge. Sexual assault goes against everything the Red Dragons and the Marine Corps represent – IT WILL NOT BE TOLERATED AND IS A CRIME. Every member of this command has the responsibility and moral obligation to confront and prevent any situation that could lead to sexual assault. Victims of sexual assault will be treated with sensitivity, dignity, and respect. Uniformed Victim Advocates, Sexual Assault Response Coordinators, and Chaplains are available 24/7 to assist.

Alcohol and Substance Abuse: Alcohol misuse and abuse is historically associated with many disciplinary issues and substantially heightens the risk of sexual assault and harassment. We will work to prevent alcohol abuse and take immediate corrective action when it occurs. Ultimately this is a team effort that comes down to taking care of ourselves and each other. The use of illegal drugs is a crime and will not be tolerated.

Equal Opportunity: VMM-268 is a performance based organization. Every member of this unit deserves to be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect. We are entitled to every opportunity to excel and reach our fullest potential; free from the barriers of discrimination or bias that is based on race, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, or national origin. Discrimination of any kind shall not be tolerated within this command.

Suicide Prevention: Tragically, suicide is the number one killer of Marines. The first step in preventing this is to commit to knowing our Marines and ourselves so that we can recognize the signs of someone who is contemplating suicide. We will never walk away from anyone who is struggling and must ensure widespread awareness of the many resources available to help deal with life stressors. Don't be afraid to ask for help. Likewise, don't be afraid to intervene and ask someone who appears to be struggling if they too need help.

Harassment, Hazing, Bullying, Ostracism, Retaliation, Distribution of Intimate Images and Supremacist Activity: Collectively the Marine Corps has designated these as "Prohibited Activities and Conduct" or PAC. We will always treat each other with dignity and respect. Any conduct that is cruel, abusive, humiliating, oppressive, demeaning, or harmful will not be tolerated. Simply stated, we shall live above reproach both on duty and off duty.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'BSPope'.

BRANDON S. POPE

Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps
Commanding Officer



Lieutenant Colonel Brandon S. Pope

Lieutenant Colonel Brandon Pope grew up in Tyler, Texas and attended Texas A&M University, earning a bachelor's degree in Geology before commissioning in the Marine Corps in 2006. After completion of The Basic School and Naval Flight Training, he reported to VMMT-204, New River, NC for MV-22B Osprey training.

Captain Pope completed MV-22B Osprey training in 2010 and reported to VMM-263 "Thunder Chickens," where he served in various assignments in the operations and maintenance departments, deploying with the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit in 2011 in support of OPERATION UNIFIED PROTECTOR in Libya and contingency operations the Middle East. In April of 2013, Captain Pope graduated from the MAWTS-1 Weapons and Tactics Instructor (WTI) Course. He then deployed as the Pilot Training Officer for VMM-263 with the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit in 2013, supporting national mission tasking in the Gulf of Aden as well as the initial response to ISIS in the early stages of OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE.



In July of 2015, Captain Pope reported to MAWTS-1 in Yuma, Arizona for duties as an MV-22B instructor pilot. While at MAWTS-1, he was promoted to Major and served as the MAWTS-1 subject matter expert on Tactical Recovery of Aircraft and Personnel (TRAP), MV-22 shipboard operations, and the MV-22 Training and Readiness syllabus. His final year he served as the MV-22B Division Head.

In July of 2018, Major Pope reported to the "White Knights" of VMM-165 in Miramar, CA. He served as the Aircraft Maintenance Officer and Operations Officer for VMM-165 where he deployed to the Middle East in support of Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force - Crisis Response - Central Command 19.1. From July 2020 through June 2022, Major Pope was assigned to Marine Aircraft Group 16 as the Group Operations Officer where he simultaneously earned a MBA from New England College via distance education. In March 2022 he was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel and in June 2022 moved to MCB Hawaii to assume command of VMM-268 "Red Dragons".

Lieutenant Colonel Pope has logged over 2,300 flight hours in the MV-22B. His personal awards include the Meritorious Service Medal (gold star in lieu of second award), Air Medal Strike/Flight numeral 2, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (gold star in lieu of second award), and Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal.

Commander's Critical Information Requirements (CCIRs)

Commander's Intent:

*If any of the below situations occurs, the Sergeant Major, Executive Officer, **and** Commanding Officer shall be notified.*

- ***Immediate Notification:*** Call the Chain of Command immediately, regardless of time, day or night.
- ***First Available Notification:*** Notify Chain of Command between the hours of 0600 and 0000.

CCIRs That Require Immediate Notification:

- Any loss of life within VMM-268 to include Marines, Sailors, hired Civilians, or family members.
- Any loss of VMM-268 aircraft to include class A/B/C aviation mishaps
- Any PEL or unexpected RON of a VMM-268 aircraft
- Any event that requires notification of MAG-24, 1st MAW, III MEF, or MARFORPAC
- Any incident that is reportable by CMC or HQMC policies
- Any General or Flag Officer communication and/or interaction
- Compromise of classified material, information, or EKMS equipment
- Any EO, PAC or sexual assault by or on a VMM-268 Marine or Sailor
- Any incident/allegation of Officer or SNCO misconduct
- Any threat to the assets or Marines and Sailors and/or the families of VMM-268
- Any arrest or incident of a VMM-268 Marine or Sailor when the media or significant discredit of the unit is involved
- Any situation that in the SDO's judgment requires the Commander's immediate attention

CCIRs That Require First Available Notification:

- Denial of support or dropped FRAG
- Any arrest or Alcohol-Related Incident (ARI) of a VMM-268 Marine or Sailor when the media or significant discredit of the unit is not involved (Minor infractions, Misdemeanors, DUIs w/o crashes involved, etc.)
- Any Flash Reports
- Any 5x8 reportable incident
- Injury, medical emergency, or hospitalization of a VMM-268 Marine, Sailor, hired Civilian, or family member.



LtCol Brandon Pope
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Commanding Officer, Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 268

"Just Real Players..."