

77th

Anniversary
&
Rededication Ceremony



March 5, 2021
Marine Attack Squadron 542

Sequence of Events

Invocation

Honor the Fallen

Taps

Presentation of Colors

National Anthem

Battle Color's Rededication

Cutting of the Cake

Commanding Officer Remarks

Closing

Narrator:

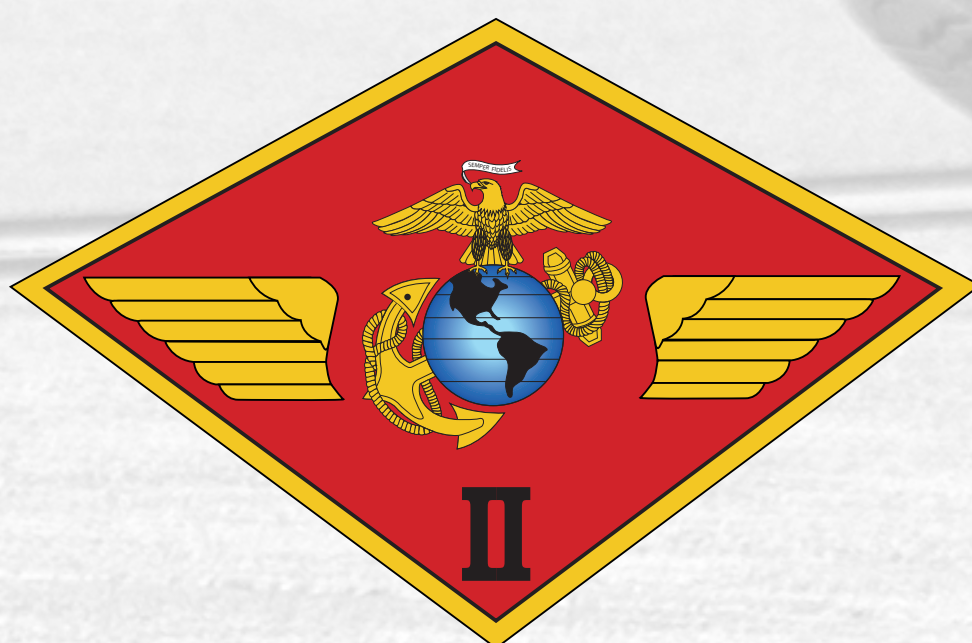
GySgt Dane A. James

Squadron Color Guard:

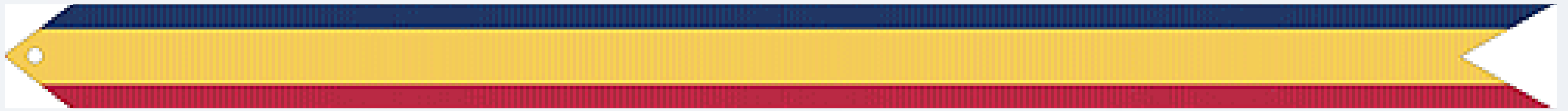
Sgt James M. Smith

Squadron Chaplain:

LCDR Kevin M. Jackson

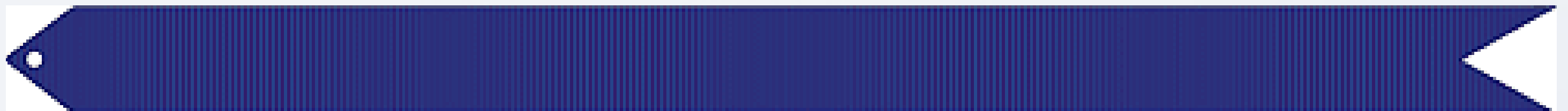


Presidential Unit Citation



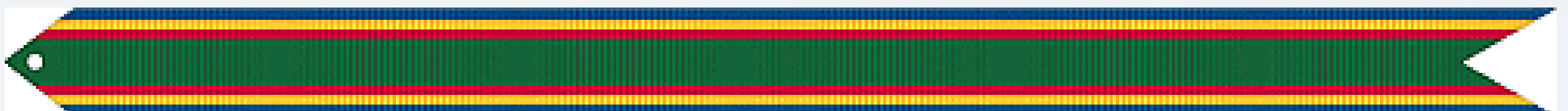
Carried by MSgt Scott A. Atwood II

Presidential Unit Citation (Army)



Carried by GySgt Roy M. Fredericks

Navy Unit Commendation



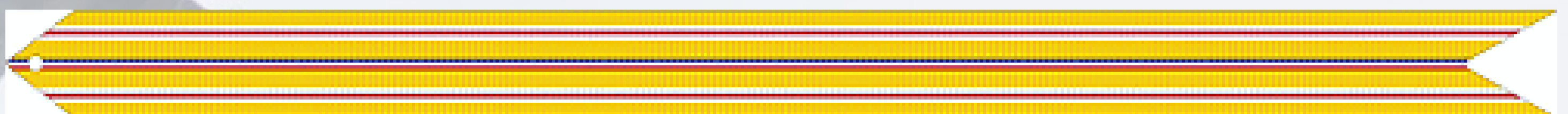
Carried by GySgt Allen S. Ravan

Meritorious Unit Commendation



Carried by MSgt Israel Cantu

The Asiatic-Pacific Campaign



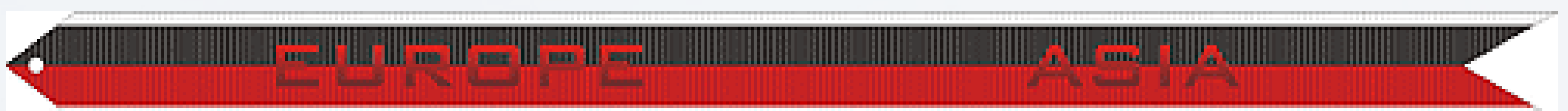
Carried by MSgt Patrick A. Lapointe

World War II Victory



Carried by SSgt Adam P. Donaghy

Navy Occupation Service Streamer With Asia



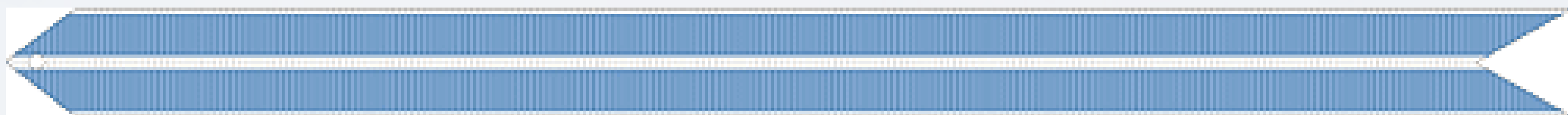
Carried by SSgt Carlos A. Paredes

National Defense Service



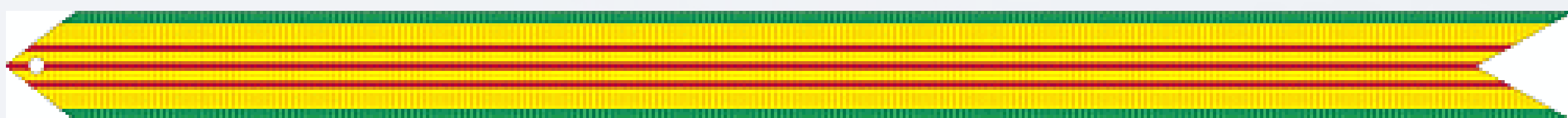
Carried by GySgt Eric S. Hoyle

Korean Service



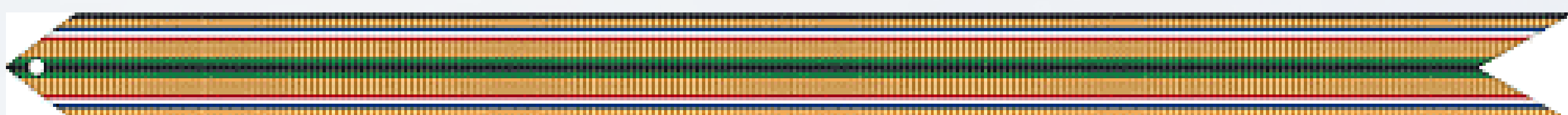
Carried by SSgt Buddy T. Tom

Vietnam Service



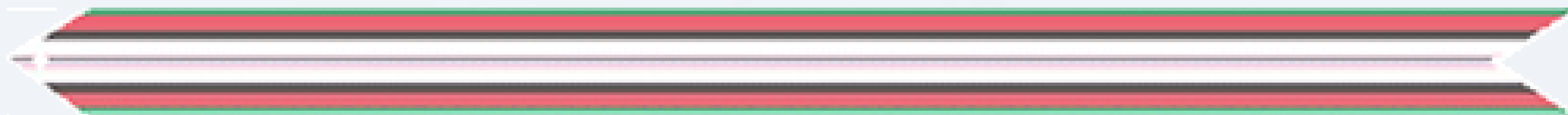
Carried by GySgt Dustin L. Putman

Southwest Asia Service



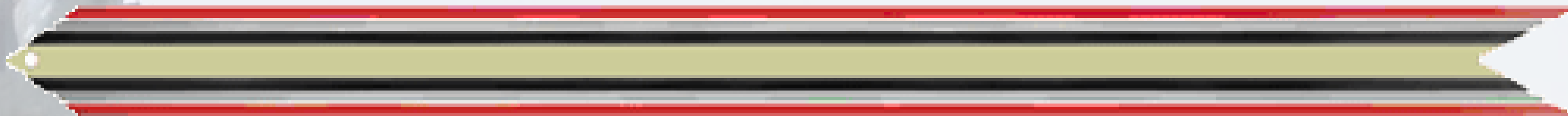
Carried by Cpl Jacob P. Kowalkowski

Afghanistan Campaign



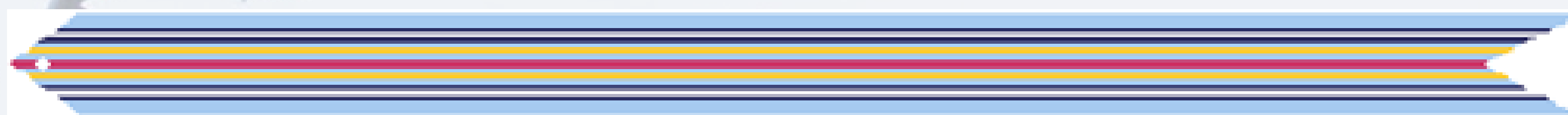
Carried by GySgt Ashley T. Keaton

Iraq Campaign



Carried by GySgt Aaron R. Cook

Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary



Carried by GySgt Matthew D. Mathwig

Global War on Terrorism Service



Carried by Cpl William C. Crowder

Korean Presidential Unit Citation



Carried by Sgt Robert A. Tipton Jr.

Vietnam Cross of Gallantry Palm



Carried by Sgt Johnny M. Blair II

VMA-542

HISTORY

Marine Attack Squadron 542 was initially commissioned as Marine Night Fighter Squadron (VMF(N)-542) on March 6, 1944 at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point, NC and assigned the F6F-3N "Hellcat". Within a year, the squadron was participating in combat operations on Okinawa in support of the Western Pacific war effort. It was during this time that VMF(N)-542 adopted the 'Kanji' symbol for 'Tiger' that would be seen throughout the rest of the squadron's history. In 1950 the squadron received the upgraded F7F-3N "Tigercat" and was ordered to Korea where they supported operations in Seoul and participated in the battle of The Chosin Reservoir. During their time in Korea, VMA(N)-542 was awarded multiple Presidential Unit Citations.



Squadron logo used in World War II



F6F-3N "Hell Cat"

In the spring of 1965, Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 542 (VMFA-542), now flying the F-4B "Phantom", deployed to Vietnam. Although named 'Fighter Attack' VMFA-542's primary mission was to provide air support to Marine ground forces and the squadron took part in some of the largest land operations of the war. VMFA-542 was deactivated in June of 1970 but then reactivated on 12 January 1972 as Marine Fighter Attack (VMA-542) and assigned the AV-8A Harrier.

In April of 1986 the squadron received AV-8B Day Attack Harrier. A few years later in 1990 VMA-542 deployed to the Island Emirate of Bahrain in support of Operation DESERT SHIELD where the squadron flew over 1000 combat sorties. Upon returning to the United States, the squadron was chosen to begin the fleet transition to the new Radar/Night Attack "Harrier II Plus" variant.



VMFA-542 F4-B "Phantoms" in Vietnam, 1969

On September 11th, 2001 VMA-542 was detached to the 22nd MEU, conducting workups aboard the USS Wasp. The squadron would later take part in missions in support of OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM in Afghanistan. In January of 2003 VMA-542 embarked aboard the USS Bataan to support operations such as Southern Watch/Force and OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM in which the squadron flew over 600 sorties totaling over 1000 combat hours. For their actions in Iraq during this time the squadron was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation. In 2004 a VMA-542 detachment supported Taskforce LINEBACKER from Kandahar Airbase in Afghanistan. At the same time VMA-542(-) supported IRAQI FREEDOM II and participated in the battle of Fallujah. 2006 saw VMA-542 participate in OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM while attached to HMM-365 on the 24th MEU. From September 2007 to April of 2008 VMA-542 supported ground forces in Iraq out of Al Asad Airbase. Not long after their return the squadron pushed out a detachment to support the 22nd MEU aboard the USS Bataan in the spring of 2009. In July of 2010 VMA- 542(-) deployed to support the UDP and the 31st MEU. During that time the squadron supported PHIBLEX and humanitarian operations in the Philippines. VMA-542 supported the 26th MEU in 2010 aboard the USS Kearsarge and supported OPERATION ODYSSEY DAWN on a deployment that lasted 258 days. The 24th MEU Detachment was deployed on the 28th of March 2012 while the squadron minus completed UDP.



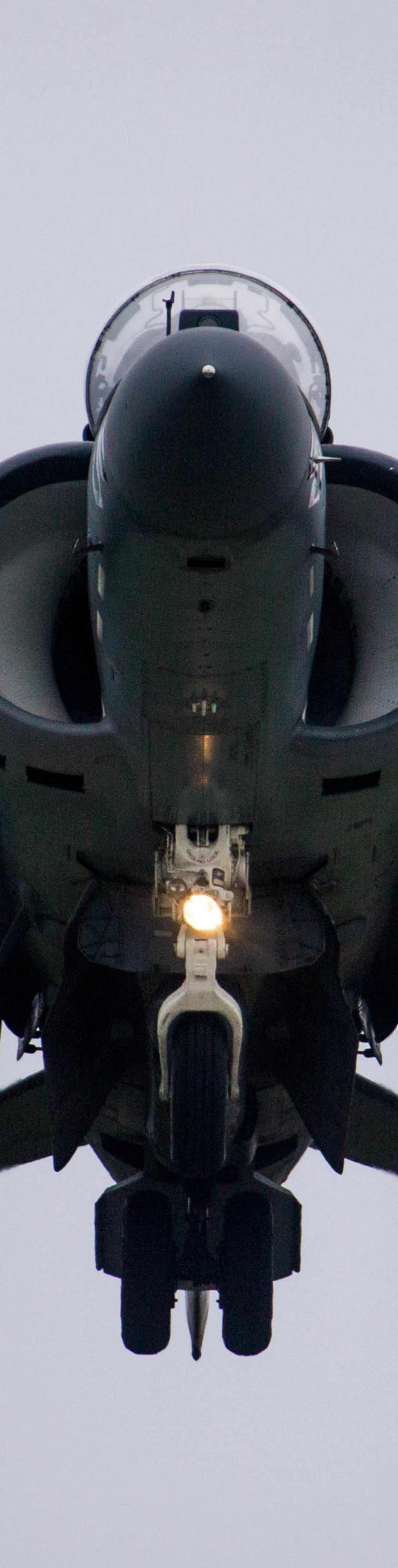
VMA-542 in Al Asad, Iraq



AV-8B Harrier

VMA-542 would deploy to Japan for UDP/31st MEU again in 2014 and participate in exercises throughout the Pacific. 2016 saw VMA-542 support the 22nd MEU in March while also supporting the 31st MEU simultaneously. In February of 2018 VMA-542 supported the 26th MEU dropping over 2500 pounds of ordnance in support of OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE. At the same time, VMA-542(-) completed a DFT, FJORD FURY, in Norway. Two

months after returning from the 26th MEU, the squadron sent a 10 aircraft detachment to El Centro, CA to support Integrated Training Exercise 1-19 at 29 palms. While supporting ITX, the squadron flew 447 hours, supported 155 sorties in direct support of ITX, and dropped 218 bombs, bringing the total ordnance dropped to over 121,000 lbs.



In 2019 the Tigers supported the Marine Corps' first ever Service Level Training Exercise over a 7 week period from NAF El Centro, CA. This saw the VMA-542(-) support both WTI and ITX simultaneously while the boat det had CHOP'd to the 26th MEU. The 26th MEU departed in December 2019 and returned in July 2020. Throughout the deployment they flew combat missions in support of OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE and multiple training flights with foreign nations and joint forces.

The Tigers of VMA-542 have proven a fully mission capable AV-8B Harrier maintained by professionals and flown by a well-trained pilot is one of the most precise, accurate, and lethal offensive air support aircraft in the world. We will strive every day by our actions to bring honor to the United States Marine Corps Harrier Force and continue the proud legacy built by all "Tigers", past and present, since 1944.



Kanji used for the "Tigers"

The Leadership within VMA-542

Lieutenant Colonel Trevor J. Felter

LtCol Felter enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1994 and served at MALS-36, MCAS Futenma, Okinawa, as a ground support electrician. He was selected to attend the U.S. Naval Academy and upon graduation in 2002 was commissioned a 2ndLt in the U.S. Marine Corps. He has served in numerous campaigns as an AV-8B pilot with VMA-223, VMA-231, VMM-162, and VMM-264, as well as an Air Officer with 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, and an AV-8B instructor pilot at VMAT-203. LtCol Felter assumed command of VMA-542 in June 2020.



Major Derek A. Mills

Maj Mills was commissioned a 2ndLt in the U.S. Marine Corps in 2006 upon graduation of the U.S. Naval Academy. Following flight training, he was assigned to VMA-513 where he served in Operation Enduring Freedom and aboard the 31st MEU. He then reported to VMAT-203 as an AV-8B instructor pilot followed by an exchange tour with the Royal Air Force as a Hawk T2 instructor pilot. Maj Mills subsequently served at VMA-542 as the Aircraft Maintenance Officer until June 2020 when he assumed the duties as the squadron Executive Officer.

Sergeant Major Gerardo Banda, Jr.

SgtMaj Banda enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in 2001 and served with MAG 24, Marine Corps Base Hawaii. He then reported to Marine Corps Recruiting Station Des Moines IA in 2004 as a part of the support staff. In 2007, he was then transferred to 3d Battalion, 12th Marines to serve as the Administrative Chief, and serve as Team Chief and Advisor to the Afghan National Army in support of Operation Enduring Freedom Afghanistan. Upon completion of that tour, he was transferred in 2010 to Recruiting Station Kansas City to serve as a Canvassing Recruiter. From 2013 to 2017, he served as the Administrative Chief of VMA 231. From 2017-2020 he served as the Company First Sergeant for Company D, 1st Tank Battalion and Battery First Sergeant for Battery M, 3d Battalion, 11th Marines. SgtMaj Banda was appointed as the Squadron Sergeant Major of VMA 542 in December 2020.





Honoring our Fallen Heroes



1stLt Clyde Hill, April 1945 - WWII

1stLt Fred Hilliard, June 1945 - WWII

2ndLt William Campbell, May 1945 - WWII

TSgt Karl Kludt, Sept. 1950 - Korea

Maj John Beabe, Sept. 1950 - Korea

Capt Gleen Jacks, Oct. 1967 - Vietnam

1stLt Fred Macgregory, Oct. 1967 - Vietnam

Maj Ray Pendergratt, July 1967 - Vietnam

Capt David Spearman, July 1967 - Vietnam

Capt John Lavoo, Sept 1968 - Vietnam

Capt Alal Holt, Sept. 1968 - Vietnam

Capt Lawrence Nalls, May 1969 - Vietnam

Capt William Pigott, May 1969 - Vietnam

Capt John Flanigan, Aug. 1969 - Vietnam

1stLt Robert Burnes, Jan. 1970 - Vietnam

Capt James Willbourne III, Feb. 1991 - Operation Desert Storm



"Wing-Man"

To the men of VMF(N)542 - United States Marine Corps



2D MAW COMMSTRAT