

## MARINE ATTACK SQUADRON 542 COMMANDING OFFICER'S GUIDANCE



***Fight to fly, fly to fight, fight to win.***

— U.S. Navy Fighter Weapons School, TOPGUN.

TOPGUN created this motto to describe training of fighter pilots. It also perfectly describes the warrior ethos of the Tigers of Marine Attack Squadron 542 and is my guidance to you as described below.

***Fight to Fly:*** This means our maintenance Marines give their utmost to safely and professionally maintain and provide full mission capable aircraft. This means our support Marines perform “administrative excellence” not as an arbitrary goal but because it ensures the well-being of our squadron and prevents distraction from our primary mission. This means our pilots exploit every opportunity to learn, train and develop their attack pilot skills. This means we develop and take care of each other and our families. A happy and healthy Tiger will be better able to focus on our mission. Every effort of our squadron should directly or indirectly generate tactically relevant sorties.

***Fly to Fight:*** Marines, let there be no doubt the entire reason an AV-8 squadron exists is to destroy enemies of our Nation’s interests. The mission of an AV-8B squadron is:

***Destroying surface targets and escorting friendly aircraft, day or night, under all weather conditions, during expeditionary, joint, or combined operations.***

We have proven a fully mission capable AV-8B Harrier flown by a well-trained pilot is one of the most precise, accurate and lethal offensive air support aircraft in the world. Tiger pilots should fly with intelligent aggression, professionalism and discipline. We will maintain our aircraft and train with a tactical focus to produce combat readiness gains. Every sortie in peacetime should measurably increase our preparation for combat.

***Fight to Win:*** As the Marine Corps’ premiere Harrier squadron, VMA-542 will succeed with teamwork. Each bomb exploding on target, on time in training or combat is the product of thousands of individual decisions and actions executed safely and professionally per standards with unrelenting focus on mission accomplishment. Our job is to always be ready to deploy anywhere in the world to conduct offensive air operations in support of our nation’s interests. Recent history has again proven the need for a well-trained and equipped sea-based AV-8 force and VMA-542’s schedule for the next two years will maintain this requirement. VMA-542 will be the “boat squadron” for MAG-14. This is a title we will earn and wear with pride. Sea-based operations are the most difficult and dangerous operations an AV-8 squadron can conduct, requiring the highest standards of professionalism to execute safely and effectively. To succeed as a squadron requires focused performance, conduct, discipline and teamwork by every member of the Tiger family. As your Commanding Officer, I promise you I will give you my best

every day. I challenge you to do the same. I look forward to serving with you as we write the next chapter of the Tiger's proud legacy.

Semper Fidelis,

Michael J. Perez  
Lieutenant Colonel, U. S. Marine Corps  
Commanding Officer, Marine Attack Squadron 542