VMAQ-4 COMMANDING OFFICER'S LETTER TO OUR FAMILIES

As your Marine reports for duty with VMAQ-4, I would like to also welcome you into the Seahawk fold. Whether this is your Marine's first assignment in a Fleet squadron or their fifth, or whether you are new to the Marine Corps family or not, this period in your life is traditionally an exciting and apprehensive time for both you and your Marine.

It is filled with excitement for your Marine because it represents the next step in the progression of their career in Marine Aviation. If this is their first assignment in the Fleet, then they have finally made it to the unit where they will train and deploy in service of their country. They will now contribute their part to the storied fighting reputation of the United States Marine Corps by putting their skills to the test.

It is filled with apprehension for your Marine for the very same reasons that it is exciting. They have either never deployed before, or if they have, perhaps never to our next deployment site. On this tour, they may hold a leadership position that they have not previously held. In any case, it is safe to assume that all of us will face new challenges in the coming months.

As a family member in support of a Marine in VMAQ-4, you will very likely experience all of the same excitement, apprehension and emotions as your Marine. As your Marine's Commanding Officer, I am responsible to the Marine Corps for the combat readiness of VMAQ-4. Combat readiness is my number one priority. This encompasses taking Marines, aircraft, and families through deployments and back with all hands accounted for. Everything we do has to support the mission readiness of the squadron

Family readiness = mission readiness. The more stable your Marine's personal and family life is, the more he or she will be able to concentrate and contribute to the unit's operational readiness. As an institution, the Marine Corps has recognized the need to train and prepare every Marine and their family in order to withstand the pressures of life events, both large and small. To this end, the Corps has hired a Family Readiness Officer (FRO) for each squadron.

The VMAQ-4 FRO is Ms. Lori Burney. She can be reached at: lori.gaston@usmc.mil (updating email address to lori.burney@usmc.mil). She is charged with providing official communication, information and resource referral, readiness and deployment support, and volunteer management for the squadron.

My staff and I stand ready to provide any assistance that we can in order to ease the hardships of Marine Corps life. In a deploying Fleet squadron, there will be hardships. These hardships can be overcome. There are numerous resources available to you and your Marine that will get you through tough times. Stay connected and keep communicating with us. If you have an obstacle that you need help overcoming, call us; overcoming obstacles is what Marines do.

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D. C. Anderson
Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps
Commanding