

# VMM-263



## Meet The Command Team

### Commanding Officer:

LtCol Sean F. Rafferty

### Executive Officer:

Maj Kristoffer P. Ljunggren

### Sergeant Major:

SgtMaj Shawn L. Campbell

### Adjutant:

Capt Ross J. Schmisser

### Uniformed Readiness Coordinator:

Capt Gabriel B. Guidroz

### Single Marine Rep:

Cpl Damian H. Eddinger

**Congratulations on becoming a member of the VMM-263 -Thunder Chickens, the best MV-22 squadron in the Marine Corps! As a Thunder Chicken, you join a lineage of “firsts”. VMM-263 was the first operational MV-22 Osprey squadron and the first to deploy as part of the Aviation Combat Element (ACE). VMM-263 was the first Osprey squadron to land in Afghanistan. Most recently, the Thunder Chickens were the first Osprey squadron to conduct the southern transatlantic flight through Bermuda. You are now part of the Thunder Chicken family as we carve our path towards new accomplishments. We look forward to you joining the fight! This Welcome Aboard packet will help with your transition into the squadron. If you cannot find what you are looking for in this packet please contact the FRO or the S-1 for more info and resources. When in doubt, “Gopher Broke!”**



## COMMANDING OFFICER'S FAMILY READINESS POLICY



Family Readiness is one of four pillars which support our overall combat readiness - equally important as training, equipment, and deployment readiness. Our success as a squadron is inextricably tied to the strength and resiliency of our squadron families. Our individual member's ability to maximize their potential, accomplish the squadron mission, and maintain the highest professional standards depends on the unwavering support and diligent care of our Thunder Chicken families.

MCO 1754.9 charges the unit Commander to establish and maintain the Unit's Family Readiness Program, but it places **the responsibility and accountability for personal and family readiness in the hands of the individual Marine and Sailor**. I will hold all VMM-263 Marines and Sailors accountable for their individual readiness, and for those who are married, the readiness of their families.

The Marine Corps' definition of "family" is one you are born into, sworn into, or married into. I encourage every Thunder Chicken Marine and Sailor to communicate with your spouse, significant other and parents as we confront the unique challenges associated with the mission, career, and life events that make up the Marine Corps lifestyle. Our Family Readiness mission is to ensure our Marines, Sailors, and their families successfully navigate these challenges. **Our Uniformed Readiness Coordinator (URC), Capt Guidroz is charged with implementing and executing the VMM-263 Family Readiness program.**

The Thunder Chicken Family Readiness program is designed to:

- ◆ **Effectively communicate squadron events and support family issues.**
  - ◇ Provide a world class welcome and introduction into the squadron for the Marine and family.
  - ◇ Keep families informed of squadron and family events through every available communication tool.
  - ◇ Keep the chain of command informed, including the URC, regarding significant family events.
- ◆ **Improve awareness and utilization of the local Marine Corps and community resources.**
  - ◇ MCCS provides a wide variety of resources to support Marine families including education assistance, deployment support, career assistance, legal services, the EFMP, and much more.
  - ◇ Provide education briefs and training opportunities in support of our Thunder Chicken families.
- ◆ **Establish, maintain, and improve relationships and camaraderie for our Thunder Chicken families.**
  - ◇ Sponsor, plan, and host a wide variety of social and family events across all squadron ranks in order to foster informal family support networks and communication.

In support of the Family Readiness Program all Thunder Chicken squadron members will:

- ◆ Complete a check-in with the URC. Thunder Chicken spouses and children are automatically enrolled; however you may include extended family and friends. Immediately inform the URC of any change in family status.
- ◆ Encourage your family to contact the URC with questions about the program or MCCS services.
- ◆ Ensure your family is mission ready! Complete a family care plan.
- ◆ Communicate with the URC, take ownership in the squadron, volunteer.

**Bottom-line: Taking care of Thunder Chicken Marines, Sailors, and their families is a priority at VMM-263.**

Lieutenant Colonel Sean F. Rafferty  
Commanding Officer, Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 263

04/28/2023

# Lieutenant Colonel Sean F. Rafferty

## VMM-263 Commanding Officer

Lieutenant Colonel Rafferty is a native of New Jersey. After graduating from The Citadel, he was commissioned a Second Lieutenant through Officer Candidate Course in 2005. Following commissioning, he reported to The Basic School (TBS) in Quantico, Virginia for initial officer training. After completion of TBS, he reported to Naval Air Station Pensacola, Florida for flight training and was designated a Naval Aviator in September 2008. Subsequently, Lieutenant Colonel Rafferty reported to Marine Medium Helicopter Training Squadron 164 (HMMT-164) "Knight Riders" aboard Camp Pendleton, California for training in the CH-46E and was designated a second helicopter second pilot in January 2009.

In February 2009, Lieutenant Colonel Rafferty reported to Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 165 (HMM-165) "White Knights" aboard Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Miramar, California. During this period, he deployed in support of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) to the Central Command (CENTCOM) area-of-responsibility, and twice in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF). Upon return of the 15th MEU, HMM-165 transitioned from the CH-46E to the MV-22B and was redesignated Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 165 (VMM-165). Lieutenant Colonel Rafferty completed transition training to the MV-22B and was designated a tiltrotor second pilot in August 2011. His first deployment to OEF was in 2012 with 3rd Marine Air Wing Forward (III MAW (FWD)) in the G-3 Operations Division, and his second OEF deployment was with VMM-165 in 2013. Lieutenant Colonel Rafferty had the opportunity to serve in various billets in both the Operations and Maintenance Departments and receive flight designations to include Weapons and Tactics Instructor (WTI) and Air Mission Commander (AMC) during his tenure with VMM-165.

In March 2015, Lieutenant Colonel Rafferty was transferred to Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 268 (VMM-268) "Red Dragons" aboard MCAS Miramar. He served as the Assistant Operations Officer and deployed in support of the Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force - Crisis Response - CENTCOM (SPMAGTF-CR-CC) 16.1, in support of Operation INHERENT RESOLVE.

In July 2016, Lieutenant Colonel Rafferty reported to Marine Helicopter Squadron One (HMX-1) "Nighthawks" aboard MCB Quantico, Virginia. During this time, he served in the Operations Department, was designated a White House Tiltrotor Aircraft Commander, and served as a White House Liaison Officer.

In September 2019, Lieutenant Colonel Rafferty received orders to report to Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 263 "Thunder Chickens" (VMM-263) aboard MCAS New River, North Carolina. Upon arrival at VMM-263 he served as the Operations Officer and deployed in support of the SPMAGTF - Crisis Response - AFRICOM (CR-AF) 20.1, and as the squadron Executive Officer until transferring in the summer of 2021 to assume the role of Marine Aircraft Group 26 (MAG-26) Operations Officer.

In June 2022, Lieutenant Colonel Rafferty reported to the office of the Chief of Naval Operations, Pentagon Washington D.C. serving as a Marine liaison officer in the Operations, Plans, and Strategy (N3/N5) Division for service integration policy.

Lieutenant Colonel Rafferty has logged over 2300 military flight hours, including over 1600 hours in the MV-22. He has been privileged to serve in commands awarded both Navy Unit Commendation and Meritorious Unit Commendations. Personal decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal with gold star, Air Medal Individual Action, Air Medal with Strike Flight Numeral "5", Navy Marine Corps Commendation Medal with two gold stars, and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal.



# Sergeant Major Shawn L. Campbell

Sergeant Major Shawn L. Campbell enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1997, graduating from Recruit Training at Parris Island in March. Following a short stopover at Camp Geiger for School of Infantry, Private First Class Campbell attended the Security Forces School in Dam Neck, Virginia, to be trained as Security Forces Personnel. Upon graduation from the schoolhouse, Private First Class Campbell was assigned to Patuxent River Naval Air Station, MD Security Forces for 2 years.

In July 1999, Lance Corporal Campbell executed Permanent Change of Station (PCS) orders to Weapons Training Battalion (WTBN), Quantico, Virginia. While at WTBN Lance Corporal Campbell was meritoriously promoted to Corporal and when his four-year contract ended, he chose to not re-enlist. After leaving the Marine Corps Mr. Campbell was hired on as a Wal-Mart Manager in Conyers, Georgia.

Mr. Campbell in Aug 2001 decided to serve some of his Reserve obligations with 4th Marine Logistics Group at Dobbins Air Reserve Base in Marietta, Georgia. In 2003 his two-year contract agreement for the Reserves had concluded and he went back into Individual Ready Reserve (IRR).

In April 2005, Corporal Campbell submitted a prior service package and lateral moved into the Combat Engineer field. He then received PCS orders to 2nd Combat Engineer Battalion (2d CEB). During his time, he deployed in 2006 to Al-Asad, Iraq with 3rd Marines 3rd Battalion (3/3) in support of OEF. Midway through the deployment he was promoted to Sergeant and then re-assigned to Haditha Damn to take charge as the Headquarters and Support Company Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge (NCOIC).

Upon returning from Iraq in October 2006, Sergeant Campbell received orders to the Basic Recruiting School and graduated in March 2007. April 2007, Sergeant Campbell reported for duty at Recruiting Station Atlanta, Georgia. During his time as a production Recruiter, he was meritoriously promoted to Staff Sergeant in January 2009 and became Recruiting Sub Station Athens, Georgia's Staff Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge (SNCOIC).

In May 2010, Staff Sergeant Campbell executed PCS orders to Range Maintenance, Marine Corps Base, Camp Pendleton, CA. While assigned to Headquarters and Service Company he maintained multiple billets, such as Substance Abuse & Family Advocacy Officer.

In May 2013, Staff Sergeant Campbell executed PCS orders to 8th Engineer Support Battalion, Camp Lejeune, NC. While assigned he executed two billets, Company Gunnery Sergeant and Battalion Legal Chief. Staff Sergeant Campbell was promoted December 2013 to Gunnery Sergeant. January 2015, he was selected to take on the task of becoming the First Sergeant for 2nd Medical Battalion.

In January 2016, Gunnery Sergeant Campbell received PCS orders to Marine Wing Support Squadron-274 Cherry Point, North Carolina. During his assignment as the Senior Enlisted Advisor for Engineer Company and he was selected to the rank of First Sergeant in November 2016.

In February 2017, First Sergeant executed PCS orders to School Of Infantry-East, Infantry Training Battalion Camp Geiger, North Carolina and served as the Company First Sergeant.

In January 2019, First Sergeant Campbell executed PCS orders to Marine Corps Detachment Infantry/Armor Training School in Fort Benning, Georgia where he served as the Senior Enlisted Leader.

In December 2021 Sergeant Major Campbell was selected to his current rank and subsequently transferred to Marine Air Support Squadron 1 on 15 March 2022 to serve as their Command Senior Enlisted Leader.

In July 2023 Sergeant Major Campbell was reassigned to VMM-263, New River Air Station, North Carolina.

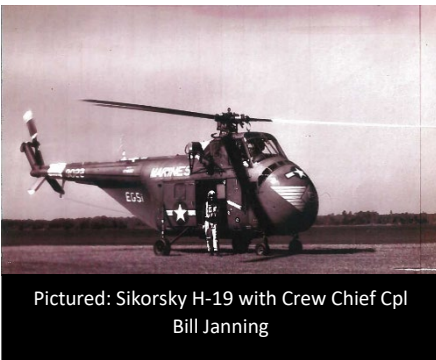
His personal decorations include the Meritorious Service Medal, Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (3<sup>rd</sup> Award), Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (4th award), Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal and various other service unit awards.



# THUNDER CHICKEN LEGACY

## VMM 263

Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 263 was activated initially as Marine Helicopter Transport Squadron (HMR-263) on June 16, 1952 and was outfitted with Sikorsky H-19 Chickasaw helicopters. For its first two years of operation the squadron was based at [Marine Corps Air Station \(MCAS\) Cherry Point, North Carolina](#). The early years were full of breakthroughs



Pictured: Sikorsky H-19 with Crew Chief Cpl Bill Janning

in not only implementation and maintenance, but how to integrate with the rest of the Fleet Marine Force. This hard work and dedication was the beginning of the “Thunder Chicken” legacy of aviation excellence and groundbreaking operational success supporting the nation’s premier “Force in Readiness.”

On July 7, 1954, HMR-263 relocated to [Marine Corps Air Facility New River](#), North Carolina, where it remained

home based for the next eleven years. During this time period the “Thunder Chickens” were honing their skills through numerous deployments and countless training exercises around the globe. The squadron was then re-designated Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron (HMM-263) and transitioned to the new Sikorsky H-34 Sea Horse. The squadron utilized their new aircraft for multiple deployments including the large-scale American response to the [Soviet Union’s](#) deployment of [intercontinental ballistic missiles](#) to [Cuba](#), the “Cuban Missile Crisis”.



Pictured: Sikorsky H-34 Seahorse

The early sixties were a time of great change and conflict around the globe, seeing many units deployed to Southeast Asia. HMM-263 would find themselves leaving for Vietnam in October, 1965. For the next two years HMM-263 served in Vietnam

participating in over twenty-four named combat operations and awarding the only Medal of Honor to an enlisted Aircrewman, PFC Clausen. After briefly being transferred to MCAS Santa Ana, California, HMM-263 was redeployed to Vietnam until April, 1971 before relocating to MCAS Quantico, VA.



Pictured: PFC Clausen Medal of Honor Recipient

The late seventies and eighties brought a time of reduced conflict around the world for the United States but not a reduced deployment schedule for the Marines. In August 1975, HMM-263 was relocated back to MCAS New River, where for the next seventeen years the squadron

deployed no less than 13 times supporting operations and humanitarian missions around the globe.

In the early nineties, HMM-263



Pictured: Boeing Vertol 'Phrog' CH-46 Sea Knight

was again there to execute our nation's bidding overseas. While attached to the [4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade](#) (4th MEB), the squadron conducted a [non-combatant evacuation operation](#) of the U.S. Embassy in [Mogadishu, Somalia](#) ([Operation Eastern Exit](#)) just prior to the events depicted in "Black Hawk Down."

The early 2000s saw HMM-263 conduct multiple combat

deployments to both [Operation Iraqi Freedom](#) (Iraq) and [Operation Enduring Freedom](#) (Afghanistan).

The squadron was officially stood



Pictured: A KC-130J Crew Chief looks on as the V-22 begins aerial refueling

down on June 3, 2005 to transition to the [MV-22 Osprey](#). HMM-263 was re-designated Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM-263) and reactivated March 3, 2006 as the first operational MV-22 squadron. On September 17, 2007, VMM-263 deployed with ten Ospreys in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, during which it conducted the first combat raid utilizing MV-22s. The squadron then became the first MV-22

squadron to support a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) when it deployed in support of the 22nd MEU in May 2009, becoming the first Ospreys to land in Afghanistan. The squadron's last deployment was in support of Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force Crisis Response Africa (SPMAGTF-CR-AF) in Moron, Spain.

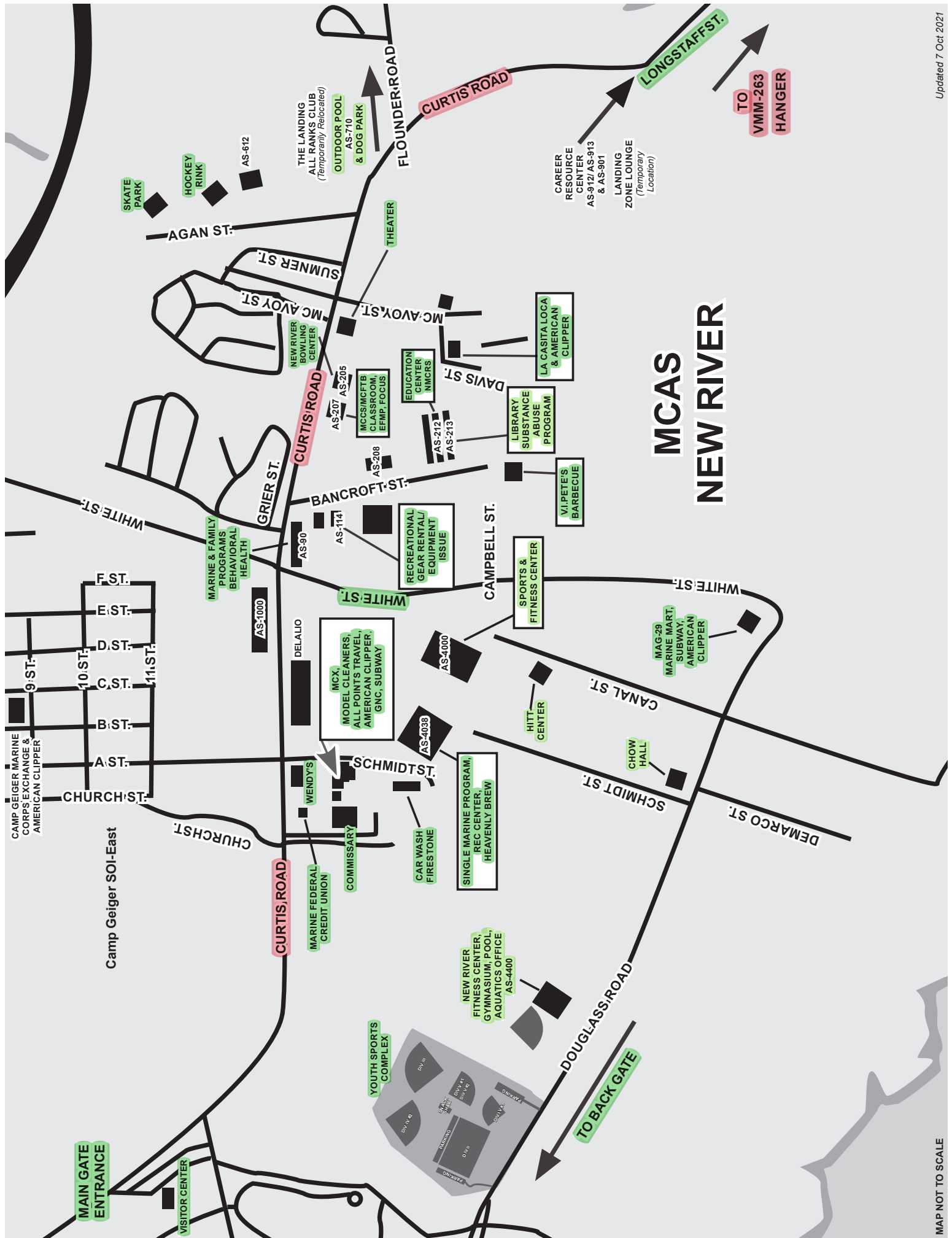
The squadron stands ready for



Pictured: MV-22 conducts LLL Boat Ops

any and all future challenges by training, working, and fighting as a team. Welcome to the starting Line Up!





**MAIN GATE ENTRANCE**

**VISITOR CENTER**

**YOUTH SPORTS COMPLEX**

**NEW RIVER FITNESS CENTER, GYMNASIUM, POOL, AQUATICS OFFICE**  
AS-4400

**CAR WASH, FIRES TONE**

**SINGLE MARINE PROGRAM, REC CENTER, HEAVENLY BREW**  
AS-4000

**MARINE FEDERAL CREDIT UNION**

**COMMISSARY**

**WENDY'S**

**MCX, MODEL CLEANERS, ALL POINTS TRAVEL, AMERICAN CLIPPER, GNC, SUBWAY**  
AS-4033

**RECREATIONAL GEAR RENTAL, EQUIPMENT ISSUE**

**SPORTS & FITNESS CENTER**

**VI.PETE'S BARBECUE**

**LIBRARY, SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROGRAM**

**LA CASITA LOGA & AMERICAN CLIPPER**

**EDUCATION CENTER, IMICRS**

**MCGS/MCFTB CLASSROOM, EFMP, FOCUS**  
AS-207, AS-205

**NEW RIVER BOWLING CENTER**

**THE LANDING ALL RANKS CLUB (Temporarily Relocated)**  
AS-710

**OUTDOOR POOL & DOG PARK**

**SKATE PARK**

**HOCKEY RINK**

**AS-612**

**CAREER RESOURCE CENTER**  
AS-912, AS-913 & AS-901

**LANDING ZONE LOUNGE (Temporary Location)**

**TO VMM-263 HANGER**

# MCAS NEW RIVER

## Welcome Aboard

### Useful Command Numbers

VMM-263 Duty	910-449-6000
VMM-263 URC	910-449-4926
MAG-26 Chaplain	910-449-7180
MAG-26 Duty	910-449-6126

### UVA

Capt Brandon T. Shields  
910-750-5852

### EO

Capt Jack A. Bugarino  
910-449-5956

### Career Planner

Sgt Huyer  
910-449-5940

### SQD Financial Specialist, Capt Guidroz

910-449-5939

### Unit Address

Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron 263  
PSC Box 21025  
Jacksonville, NC 28545

### Single Marine Program

910-449-5145

### School Information

School Liaison: Jill Campbell	910-449-4702
Onslow County Schools:	910-358-3926
DoD Schools – Camp Lejeune:	910-382-5639

### Base Housing

Atlantic Marine Corps Communities  
[www.atlanticmcc.com](http://www.atlanticmcc.com)

### Social/ Legal Help

Marine and Family Services:	910-449-6110
Dept. Of Social Services:	910-347-4717
WIC:	910-347-5002
Chaplain:	910-449-6801
Legal Assistance:	910-449-6169
PMO:	910-449-4248
Jacksonville Police:	910-455-4000
F.O.C.U.S:	910-685-3523
Exceptional Family Member:	910-449-5251
Navy Marine Corps Relief Society:	910-449-6431
Loan Closet:	910-449-5258

### New Parent Support

90 Curtis Road Building AS-90, Jacksonville NC 28545  
910-449-4866 [www.mccslejeune.com/mcftb/npsp.html](http://www.mccslejeune.com/mcftb/npsp.html)

Child Care MCASNR  
Child Development Center Curtis Road AS-1000  
910-449-6712  
[www.newriver.usmc-mccs.org/m&fs.html](http://www.newriver.usmc-mccs.org/m&fs.html)

### ID/Deers

DEERS/Pass & ID Office is on Curtis Road Bldg AS-187  
910-449-6354  
[www.newriver.usmc.mil/welcomeaboard](http://www.newriver.usmc.mil/welcomeaboard)

**Financial Services** / Personal Financial Manager  
Bancroft Rd Building AS-213 910-449-4749 [www.usmc-mccs.org/finance](http://www.usmc-mccs.org/finance)

### Family Team Building

910-449-4676

### Medical

Naval Hospital Camp Lejeune 100 Brewster Boulevard  
910-450-4300  
[www.med.navy.mil/sites/nhcl](http://www.med.navy.mil/sites/nhcl)  
Tricare 877-TRI-CARE (874-2273)

### Family Member Employment Assistance

910-450-1676  
[www.mccslejeune-newriver.com/fmeap](http://www.mccslejeune-newriver.com/fmeap)

### Transition Assistance

AS-913 Longstaff St  
910-449-4914  
[www.mccslejeune-newriver.com/trs](http://www.mccslejeune-newriver.com/trs)

### Education Assistance

AS-212 Bancroft St  
910-449-6233  
[www.mccslejeune-newriver.com/edu](http://www.mccslejeune-newriver.com/edu)

### Commissary

Curtis Road Building AS-4055  
910-449-6395  
[www.commissaries.com/stores/](http://www.commissaries.com/stores/)

### Veterinary Services

Camp Lejeune, 2459 Iwo Jima Boulevard, Bldg. TT-2451  
910-450-1607

### Useful websites

[www.mccslejeune-newriver.com](http://www.mccslejeune-newriver.com)  
[www.militaryonesource.mil](http://www.militaryonesource.mil)  
[www.operationhomefront.com](http://www.operationhomefront.com)  
[www.uso.com](http://www.uso.com)  
[www.mccslejeune-newriver.com/mcftb](http://www.mccslejeune-newriver.com/mcftb)

### Top Realty in the local area

[www.century21sweyer.com/jacksonville-office/](http://www.century21sweyer.com/jacksonville-office/)  
[www.coastalrealtyassociates.com](http://www.coastalrealtyassociates.com)  
[www.jacsonvillerealtygroup.com](http://www.jacsonvillerealtygroup.com)  
[www.seacoastrealty.com](http://www.seacoastrealty.com)