



## April Speaker | Blacksheep Transitions from AV-8B to F-35B



**Lieutenant Colonel Keith E. Bucklew, USMC**  
**Commanding Officer**  
**Marine Attack Squadron VMA-214**

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION YUMA, Ariz. -- Marine Attack Squadron (VMA) 214, Marine Aircraft Group 13, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW), conducted a re-designation ceremony at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Yuma, Arizona, March 25, 2022.

As part of the transition from the AV-8B Harrier to the F-35B Lightning II, VMA-214 was re-designated as Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA) 214. The F-35B Lightning II is replacing the AV-8B Harrier to introduce unmatched capabilities to the Marine Corps. The F-35B Lightning II represents a leap forward in air dominance by providing the operational agility and tactical supremacy Marines need to provide expeditious and lethal support.

VMA-214 was initially commissioned as Marine Fighter Squadron (VMF) 214 on July 1, 1942, on Oahu, Hawaii, flying the F4F Wildcat before transitioning to the F4U-1 Corsair. The squadron completed two combat tours under the previous call-sign "Swashbucklers" before reforming as the "Black Sheep" under the leadership of U.S. Marine Corps Major Gregory "Pappy" Boyington in August 1943.

The Marines of VMF-214 selected the new squadron namesake to highlight the pilots' varied experience levels. From seasoned veterans with multiple combat tours under their wings to pilots fresh from flight school, the Black Sheep built their legacy from years of arduous fighting in World War II. As a result of their accomplishments, VMF-214 became the first Marine fighter squadron awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for extraordinary heroism in action.

On July 9, 1957, the squadron was re-designated VMA-214 as the Black Sheep transitioned to flying fixed-wing attack aircraft. In Vietnam, the Marines of VMA-214 distinguished themselves as an attack squadron, flying the trustworthy A-4 Skyhawk from expeditionary airfields in Chu Lai. The Black Sheep continued to fly the A-4 until 1989, when they transitioned to the AV-8B Harrier. Over the next 30 years, the Black Sheep participated in combat operations throughout the globe, including Operation Restore Hope, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation Enduring Freedom. Most recently, VMA-214 completed its final AV-8B deployment with the 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit, during which they participated in Operation Inherent Resolve.

"The re-designation of VMA-214 to VMFA-214 is the end of a legacy for the Black Sheep

and Marine Aircraft Group-13,” said U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Col. Keith Bucklew, the outgoing commander of VMA-214. “This symbolic event finalizes the sundown for Harriers on the West Coast and closes the chapter on 58 years of attack aircraft operations for the Black Sheep.

“Finishing this mission with a successful 11th Marine Expeditionary Unit deployment is a testament to the viability and performance of the Harrier over the last 33 years and, more importantly, the talent of the Marines who managed them,” added Bucklew. “The AV-8B will be missed in the skies of Yuma, but it is time to transition to the next generation of fighter attack aircraft.”

"The F-35's fifth-generation strike fighter capability brings more lethality and flexibility to combatant commanders than any other fighter platform," said U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Col. Christopher Kelly, the commanding officer of VMFA- 214. "The STO/VL capability inherent in the F-35 "B" variant allows the Marine Corps to operate expeditiously and from remote locations, making the model uniquely qualified at supporting expeditionary advanced base operations."

3rd MAW continues to “Fix, Fly and Fight” as the Marine Corps’ largest aircraft wing and remains combat-ready, deployable on short notice, and lethal when called into action.

*Story by 1st LT Zachary Bodner and LCpl. Courtney Robertson, 3rd MAW. Photo: Sgt Samuel Ruiz*



## Winter Training Complete, Blue Angels Head Home



The Blue Angels successfully kicked off their 76th show season at Naval Air Facility's Festival of Flight on 12 March 2022. Following airshow, the team members were anxious to head home for a few days to see their families before their next show in New Orleans.

As part of the Festival of Flight, the Council sponsored the Airshow Performers chalet to enable the static and airshow performers to enjoy food and beverages during their visit.

For 26 years, the council has provided "Welcome Wagon" support to the Base's Morale, Welfare and Recreation Department during airshow to welcome incoming aircraft with cold beverages after transiting to El Centro for the airshow.

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## The Grill Is Ready. Are you? Reservations Required

### **We're expecting you!**

We are continuing to be limited to 50 guests for our dinners.

All members and their guests must have their names on our security access list prior to the dinner.

Unsure if you're on the list?

Need a reservation?

Call us, and we'll take care of the details -- and, make sure we have



a delicious T-bone on the grill for you.

When Our Nation Called, They Answered

*5th Anniversary*

**NATIONAL VIETNAM WAR  
VETERANS DAY**

29 March 2022



THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA VIETNAM WAR COMMEMORATION



The Vietnam War Veterans Recognition Act of 2017 was signed into law by 45th U.S. President Donald J. Trump, designating every March 29 as National Vietnam War Veterans Day. We set aside today to remember those men and women who died while serving our country in the Vietnam War, and we "Welcome Home", and show our thanks to those who did. We are privileged to acknowledge their proud legacy of service.

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## 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemoration |...

National Vietnam War Veterans Day 2022 Adm. Karl Schultz, Commandant, U.S. Coast Guard Gen. Glen VanHerck, Commander, NORAD and USNORTHCOM Lance Corporal Richard Allen Anderson Lance Corporal Miguel Keith Gary Sinise joins with the Department of...

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[www.vietnamwar50th.com](http://www.vietnamwar50th.com)

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## Legislative Affairs Update

### **VOICES TO CONGRESS ACTION CENTER: It's as easy as 1, 2, 3.**

There are a number of important issues we encourage you to make your voice heard. Visit our [Action Center](#) today to engage in our grassroots mission by writing a letter and voicing your support on the issues that matter to our sea services.

#### **Tanker Security Program**

We cannot rely on foreign tankers to safeguard America's national security interests.

#### **Defend the Jones Act Jobs**

The Jones Act provides essential to America's maritime security and it is under attack! Stand up for our Merchant Marines and American shipbuilders by telling Congress to support the Jones Act.

#### **Sea Air Space**

Invite your Senators and House Representatives to Sea Air Space (SAS) -- it's the largest Maritime Exposition in the United States. SAS brings the U.S. defense industry and key military decision-makers together for three days of informative educational sessions, important policy discussions and a dynamic exhibit hall floor. Let's get this important Navy League event on their calendars!

#### **Co-Sponsor the Energizing American Shipbuilding Act**

The bipartisan Energizing American Shipbuilding Act will bolster the U.S. flag fleet, secure our shipbuilding industrial base, and overcome our current deficit in Merchant Mariners.

### **CENTER FOR MARITIME STRATEGY**

Have you checked out the Navy League's webpage for our new think tank, [the Center for Maritime Strategy](#)? Navy League members and the public can catch up on the latest activities and news involving the organization, including blog posts written by Adm. Foggo and podcasts. Feel free to share the program with others so we can spread their important mission nationwide.

## President's Message

Fellow Navy Leaguers,

We've had a busy couple of months with restarting our dinner meetings, concluding Desert Outing, followed by airshow, and reingaging the Blacksheep after their return from their deployment.

Both Roy Caldwell and I were guests of the Blacksheep during their change of command and redesignation from VMA-214 to VMFA-214. The Blacksheep's Commanding Officer, Lieutenant Colonel Keith Bucklew is retiring from the Marine Corps, but before he departs, he will be giving us an update on the squadron's recent deployment, and transition to the F-35B. Also joining us will be LtCol Bucklew's replacement, Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Kelly who will lead the squadron in the next chapter of the squadron's history book. I know you won't want to miss an opportunity to meet LtCol Kelly with a warm welcome



Over the past few years, it has been our honor to offer support to the Blacksheep when they return home following a deployment. With the squadron's return, I am working with them to arrange an opportunity for us to host the squadron's BBQ lunch during their Barracks Bash at Lake Martinez. We hope to be able to do this during the month of April. I'll be looking for a host of volunteers to help with this endeavor. These Marines are due some R&R, and a delicious BBQ from our famous grill will be a welcomed "home-cooked" meal for them.

On other fronts, news from the USCGC PETREL informs us that the ship is in drydock for maintenance overhaul, and the ship's Officer in Charge, BMCM Jason Roberts, will be leaving PETREL's command.

When the PETREL completes their maintenance work, we will welcome their new leadership, and hope to plan their annual Coast Guard Birthday celebration with a day of Padres baseball at Petco Park. We will make that announcement later once we are able to get confirmation. In the meantime, we wish to give a hearty FAREWELL to Master Chief Jason Roberts who has led the PETREL through a successful tour. We have appreciated his willingness to allow the Council to support his crew these past two years.

I hope you will pause today, as I will, and reflect on the service of our Vietnam War Veterans. Their war was brutal, and there are more than 58,000 lost servicemember's names etched on a Wall in our nation's capital who sacrificed all. We can draw inspiration from Veterans all around us, who endured unspeakable things -- some who were held captive as prisoners of war, and many others who are still "Missing in Action." Let us all pledge to recognize their important contributions to our nation, and never forget their sacrifices.

I know you're as anxious to hear about the Blacksheep's deployment update, as well as their future mission with the F-35. This is a not-to-be-missed dinner for sure. We're standing by to take your dinner reservation for next week's meeting. Unsure if you're on

our list? [Contact us](#). We want to see you, and we want to know how important you are to our mission and supporting the men and women of the sea services.

Let's "Meat" again next Tuesday.



Ted Gallinat, President  
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## Upcoming T-Bone Dinners and Events

**APR 5 | Navy League Dinner | 6:30 pm**

**APR | VMFA-214 Barracks Bash & BBQ | TBD**

**MAY 3 | Navy League Dinner | 6:30 pm**

**JUN 7 | Navy League Dinner | 6:30 pm**

**JUL | Navy League Dinner | DARK -No Meeting**

**AUG | USCGC PETREL San Diego Padre Baseball | TBD**

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## Follow Us Whenever, and Wherever We Go!



## Welcome New and Returning Members | 1st Quarter 2022

Membership is important to sustaining our organization, and supporting our adopted units. Thank you for your support!

Mike Bilek  
David (Mike) Burk  
Michael Dahm  
Pamela Digiovanni  
Sheri Eckmann  
Allen Elliott  
Dr. Luman Ferrell Jr  
Daniel Folwick Jr

Tim Guzman  
Michael Holehan  
Spencer Hughes  
Roger Johnson  
Kathy Kline  
Spencer McNamara  
David Morales  
Angela Nelson  
Kyle Oldoerp

Lee Quarcelino, Sr.  
James Richardson  
Tricia Speakman  
Diana Steward  
Jonathan Villa  
Victor Villa  
Jenna West  
Rodney West

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You receive benefits too!

Membership now open to all active duty service members

[Become A Member](#)

## Our Supported Units



NAVAL AIR FACILITY  
EL CENTRO



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USMC MARINE FIGHTER ATTACK  
SQUADRON VMFA-214



USCGC PETREL  
WPB 87350



NAVY MUNITIONS COMMAND  
CONUS WEST DETACHMENT



STRIKE FIGHTER WING PACIFIC  
MAINTENANCE UNIT EL CENTRO



NAVAL BRANCH MEDICAL  
EL CENTRO



USS FITZGERALD DDG 62



DESERT EAGLE SQUADRON  
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TRAINING SHIP KIT CARSON



CALEXICO HIGH SCHOOL

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**USCGC PETREL**

**VMFA-214**

**Strike Fighter Wing Pacific Maintenance Unit**

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## **The Official Publication of the Navy League**

In print since 1902, Seapower provides Navy League members, sea service chiefs and members of Congress with the most relevant news affecting the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and U.S.-flag Merchant Marine.

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