

VMFA-122 Commanding Officer – Suicide Prevention Policy



This squadron's sole purpose is to deploy into combat, fight and win whenever our nation calls. From the World War II Pacific campaign, to Vietnam and the Global War on Terrorism, VMFA-122 has established a remarkable legacy of service to country and Corps. I am honored to command the best squadron in the Marine Corps.

My Vision

"Passionate and disciplined commitment to balanced excellence."

Each of you is required for this squadron to achieve balanced excellence.

Through June of 2011, 93 Marines have attempted suicide and 17 have died at their own hands. Suicide is one of the leading killers of Marines. The majority of this squadron is in the *at risk* population for suicide with the nearly all suicides in the Marine Corps occurring between the ages of 18-25 years old. We can and must be aware of the mental and emotional challenges that lead to suicides. I call on every member of this squadron to engage early and often with empathy and compassion in order to help our fellow Marine or Sailor through the times of turmoil and depression.

The annual awareness and additional training requirements are a must – this is the VMFA-122 standard. Training is a start, additionally it will take engaged and intrusive leadership at all levels to see the signs and act before it is too late. Look left and right – this is where the engagement starts, and it continues with mentors and NCOs, the chain of command as well as expertise provided by the Flight Surgeon and Chaplain. Additionally, look in the mirror. There are several resources to help each and every one through difficult times – no matter how challenging. These include the *Suicide Prevention Hotline*, (800)273-8255, and *Military One Source* at www.militaryonesource.com or 1(800)-342-9647 that are available 24/7 to help you through the overwhelming moments and get you the help you need.

You can prevent suicides! I am committed to ensuring every Marine or Sailor is taken care of, and I ask for your commitment in this effort. **Observe, listen, empathize and act!** Once again, this squadron needs every single Marine, Sailor and civilian to achieve balanced excellence – this includes you!

Semper Fidelis,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Wiegel", written over a horizontal line.

Wade E. Wiegel

Lieutenant Colonel, United States Marine Corps
Commanding