

**COMMANDER'S UNIT, PERSONAL AND FAMILY READINESS PROGRAM POLICY**



We have been given the opportunity of a lifetime to introduce the F-35B Lightning II to the Marine Corps. It will be a challenge for our families to become familiar with Eglin Air Force Base and Air Force customs while maintaining personal readiness.

Family Readiness is a key component to mission readiness. Our Family Readiness Officer will play a critical role in establishing our unit personal family readiness program. The family readiness officer will be a vital source for information and referral to the Marine and their families. We will use the latest technology provided by the Corps for communications using multiple methods by multiple means. We will use local and national resources to better prepare and help our families and Marines. The Family Readiness officer will provide volunteer information to the families and help them to be active in the squadron and community we now call home.

I will encourage family events for all Marines, whether married or single. We will empower our Marines and their families with training, tools, and opportunities such as Lifestyle, Insight, Networking, Knowledge, Skills (L.I.N.K.S.), Military OneSource, and command-sponsored events that enable families to interact with the squadron and its leadership. We will leverage local support for our families to include the Airman & Family Readiness Center, MFLC, and Chaplains.

Finally, I encourage our single Marines to welcome their parents and family members into the Warlord family network. We are caretakers of America's finest sons and daughters and I am deeply grateful for this honor.

My Family Readiness Policy is to take care of our Marines and their families. I ask all Warlords to join me in the effort.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. R. Berke'. The signature is stylized and written in a cursive-like font.

DAVID R. BERKE  
Lieutenant Colonel, U. S. Marine Corps  
Commanding Officer

## COMMANDER'S SUICIDE PREVENTION POLICY



As Warlords, you have been picked for the historic mission of introducing the F-35B to the Marine Corps. Each of you is a precious and vital asset that we cannot afford to lose, but you should be aware that the Marine Corps continues to struggle with an unacceptable suicide rate. At VMFAT-501 we will expend every resource available to identify and care for Marines with suicidal ideations.

As Marines we face significant personal and professional challenges, but we have all the tools we need to overcome adversity of any kind. Primary stressors associated with Marine suicides include: problems in romantic relationships, physical health, work-related issues, and pending legal or administrative action. None of these issues constitute an insurmountable obstacle or an impossible dilemma and I assure you that your chain of command is here to help you resolve any problem you face.

A team effort is required for effective suicide prevention; if someone in your work center seems distressed or depressed, don't be afraid to ask the question, "Are you thinking of killing yourself?" If you are suicidal or if you suspect a fellow Marine is considering suicide, use one of the following resources to get immediate help:

- Chain of command
- Chaplain (883-4043/882-2111)
- Military OneSource 24/7 (800-342-9647)
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800-273-8255)
- HQMC Suicide Prevention Website ([www.usmc-mccs.org/suicideprevent](http://www.usmc-mccs.org/suicideprevent))
- Leaders' Guide for Managing Marines in Distress (<http://www.usmc-mccs.org/leadersguide>)
- Marine Corps Community Services (MCCS) counselor for particular area of distress ([www.mccssc.com](http://www.mccssc.com))
- Airman & Family Readiness Center (850-882-9060/2275/4382)
- Eglin Military & Family Life Consultant (850-420-8542)

There is no shame in asking for help if you find yourself burdened by distress, depression, or thoughts of suicide. If you find yourself in these circumstances you will have the full support of the command to get healthy and continue to pursue your career and personal goals.

At VMFAT-501 we will act as a team to identify Marines who are struggling with emotional distress and get them the support they need ASAP. This is all part of knowing and taking care of our Warlord family; you have my full support in this effort.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Berke".

DAVID R. BERKE  
Lieutenant Colonel, U. S. Marine Corps  
Commanding Officer

## COMMANDER'S EQUAL OPPORTUNITY POLICY



Every member of VMFAT-501 deserves to be treated in a manner consistent with the title, "United States Marine." As a Marine, you are entitled to be treated with fairness, dignity, and respect. You are also entitled to be given opportunities to excel and reach your fullest potential, free from the barriers of discrimination. Finally, you are entitled to be treated without any bias based on race, creed, color, gender, sexual preference, or national origin.

Discrimination is the act of prejudging a person or group based on their race, religion, gender, ethnicity, sexual preference, or national origin. Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination that involves unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. The foundation of the VMFAT-501 Equal Opportunity and Sexual Harassment Policy is simple: **"Discrimination and sexual harassment will not be tolerated within this command."** Both are causes for disciplinary action that may result in a discharge from the Marine Corps or Navy.

All members of VMFAT-501 are encouraged to find solutions to discrimination or sexual harassment problems by using the **Squadron's Equal Opportunity Representative, GySgt Smith, and the Informal Resolution System.** If a situation remains unresolved, any Marine in this Command has the right to Request Mast. Furthermore, you have the right to present any legitimate complaint or grievance to the command without fear of reprisal. Finally, you have the responsibility to advise the command of any discrimination complaints and to submit only legitimate complaints or grievances.

**If you have any questions regarding equal opportunity, contact GySgt Smith at (850) 885-5146, or use the Equal Opportunity and Sexual Harassment Advice Line at (800) 253-0931, DSN 882-2507.**

VMFAT-501 sits on the vanguard of Marine Aviation as we commence flight operations in the F-35B Lightning II. There is no place in this unit for discrimination and sexual harassment and I ask you to ensure that every Marine in this command is treated with fairness, dignity, and respect.

Semper Fidelis,

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DAVID R. BERKE  
Lieutenant Colonel, U. S. Marine Corps  
Commanding Officer

## COMMANDER'S SAFETY POLICY



VMFAT-501 is charged with employing the F-35B, the newest fighter aircraft in Marine Aviation. We share a tremendous responsibility to properly care for our airplanes, but we must also preserve our most valuable warfighting assets, our Marines and Sailors. At VMFAT-501 we will take care of our airplanes and our fellow Marines as we conduct safe and effective operations in the F-35B.

There is inherent risk associated with 5<sup>th</sup> Generation aviation. We will smartly identify hazards, make sound risk decisions, and properly supervise all aspects of operations. We will resist pressure to cut corners; there is no task at VMFAT-501 that will justify unsafe operations or unmanaged risk. Mishaps often result from a failure to anticipate hazards or a tendency to become complacent in routine operations. We will work hard to fight such trends and maintain a self-critical and transparent culture in which we acknowledge and learn from mistakes without fear of retribution.

The Warlord mission is to train F-35B pilots and we will optimize every training opportunity, but we will never sacrifice safety in order to "get the X." Always comply with NATOPS/FSD, OPNAV 3710, OPNAV 4790, Training Rules, and SOP. You are maintaining and flying a national asset; do not take any action that you could not defend with a clear conscience. Be assertive and do not allow yourself to be surprised by this new airplane.

Aside from the inherent risk of flight operations, our biggest threat is off-duty automobile and motorcycle accidents that involve alcohol, excessive speed, and fatigue. Tragically, we consistently lose more Marines on the highway than we lose in combat. We will avoid such losses at VMFAT-501 through vigilant supervision and the following control measures:

- **Motorcycle riders will complete required training.**
- **All supervisors will ensure their subordinates have sound leave and liberty plans.**
- **When driving wear your seatbelt, minimize distractions such as cell phones, comply with traffic laws, and ensure you are rested.**
- **Do not drink and drive. Ever.**

At VMFAT-501 we will maintain an open climate in which procedural doctrine is never outweighed by perceived pressure to get the job done. We will do the job right the first time, take care of our fellow Marines, and we will be both successful and safe.

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DAVID R. BERKE  
Lieutenant Colonel, U. S. Marine Corps  
Commanding Officer

## COMMANDER'S SEXUAL ASSAULT POLICY



Any attack on the dignity of another Marine will not be tolerated in this command. Sexual assault is a crime. It is defined as intentional sexual contact, characterized by the use of force, physical threat of force, or abuse of authority or when the victim does not or cannot consent. Sexual assault can occur without regard to gender or spousal relationship or age of victim.

**"Consent" shall not be deemed or construed to mean the failure by the victim to offer physical resistance. Consent is not given when a person uses force, threat of force, coercion, or when the victim is asleep, incapacitated, or unconscious.**

Sexual assault diminishes the reputation and prestige of the Marine Corps. It destroys trust and erodes unit cohesion. Sexual assault violates our core values, and causes both short-term and long-term trauma for victims. Failure to report sexual assault incidents may further damage victims and the reputation of our Corps.

Reporting a sexual assault may be done via the following reports:

- **Restricted report** allows a victim to receive medical, informational, advocacy, and emotional/psychological counseling support services without notification of law enforcement or the command. A restricted report can be made to a **Uniformed Victim Advocate (UVA), Sexual Assault Response Coordinator (SARC), Healthcare Provider (HCP), or Military OneSource 24/7 (800-342-9647)**. In a restricted report, the victim's identity remains confidential, and it is not forwarded to law enforcement or command authorities.
- **Unrestricted report** also allows a victim to receive medical, informational, advocacy, and emotional/psychological counseling support services, and it causes an official investigation to ensue. An unrestricted report can be made to law enforcement authorities or the command, as well as to a UVA, SARC, HCP, Chaplain, or Military OneSource. Although the victim's identity will not remain confidential, care will be given to ensure that it is released only to those with a need to know (i.e. unit commander and investigating authorities).

All Marines and Sailors who become aware of a sexual assault are required to report the incident to PMO or the chain of command. If you learn that a sexual assault incident occurred but was not reported, or that an assault is being planned, notify your chain of command immediately.

As Marines, we respect each other's dignity and treat each other with respect. We are a squadron that knows the right path to take, whether in the work center or off-duty. Any attack or assault of a sexual nature will be investigated as a criminal act.

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