

Deactivation Ceremony



Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 769

Marine Aircraft Group 46

Fourth Marine Aircraft Wing

Edwards Air Force Base, California

2 August 2008

*The Commanding Officer
welcomes You to the
Squadron Deactivation Ceremony
where the Roadhogs
of
Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron
769
will be disestablished,
following
50 years in Service
to
Our great Nation*

*Sequence of Events
Invocation
Sound Attention
Sound Adjutant's Call
Box the Staff
Honors to the Commanding General
Troop the Line
March on the Colors
National Anthem
Guest of Honor's Remarks
Commanding Officer's Remarks
Retire the Guidons
Retire the Colors
Anchors Aweigh
Marines' Hymn
Auld Lang Syne
Dismiss the Squadron*

COMMAND STAFF

Commander of Troops	<i>Lieutenant Colonel Ernest H. Henderson II</i>
Adjutant	<i>Chief Warrant Officer 2 Robert J. Kendall</i>
Commander's Staff	<i>Major Theodore E. Martin Major Don M. White Chief Warrant Officer 4 Noel A. Tabares Chief Warrant Officer 2 Robert J. Kendall Staff Sergeant Gabriel Cruz Staff Sergeant Shannon R. Deese Staff Sergeant James H. Haughey Staff Sergeant Michael E. Hernandez</i>
Platoon Commanders	<i>Major Francis G. Gala Captain John P. Arnold</i>
Platoon Guides	<i>Corporal Tyler W. Johnson Lance Corporal Anthony D. Hamilton</i>
Guidon Bearers	<i>Master Sergeant John M. Ellis Gunnery Sergeant Sean M. Folan</i>
Color Guard	<i>Sergeant Nicholas E. Henderson Sergeant Jehuel E. Enriquez Sergeant Daniel S. Huddleston Sergeant Matthew J. Rosania</i>
Narrator	<i>Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey McGinnis</i>
Chaplain	<i>Lieutenant Colonel Donald J. Hoffman, USAF</i>



Guest of Honor **Brigadier General Mark W. Bircher**

was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in 1976. After flight training he joined Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 451, MCAS Beaufort, SC, flying the F-4 Phantom. He held junior officer billets in the maintenance and operations departments during two unit deployments to Iwakuni, Japan. During 1982-1984, Captain Bircher was an exchange pilot with the U. S. Air Force flying the F-15 Eagle with the 56th Tactical Fighter Squadron, Eglin AFB, FL. From 1984 until leaving active duty in 1988, he served with the Navy Flight Demonstration Squadron – the Blue Angels – at NAS Pensacola, FL, flying the A-4 Skyhawk and the F/A-18 Hornet.

Transferring to the Marine Corps Reserve, Major Bircher flew the OV-10 Bronco from 1991 until 1994. He was the Maintenance Officer and then Commanding Officer of Marine Observation Squadron 4 at NAS Atlanta, GA. Following F/A-18 refresher training, Lieutenant Colonel Bircher served as Commanding Officer of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 142, NAS Cecil Field, FL, from 1994 until 1997. In 1998, Lieutenant Colonel Bircher joined the Executive Support Center, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Policy, Pentagon, serving as a Watch Officer. During 1999-2001, Colonel Bircher served as Deputy Commander, Marine Aircraft Group 42, NAS Atlanta, GA. In 2002, Colonel Bircher joined the 4th Marine Aircraft Wing at NSA New Orleans, LA, as Assistant Chief of Staff, G-8. Upon recall to active duty in 2003, he augmented to 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing for deployment to Southwest Asia in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. When released from active duty, Colonel Bircher rejoined 4th Marine Aircraft Wing in 2004. Brigadier General Bircher served as the Deputy Commanding General, I Marine Expeditionary Force (MOB), Camp Pendleton, CA, prior to assuming command of the 4th Marine Aircraft Wing.

Brigadier General Bircher is a graduate of the Naval Academy, Airborne, Topgun, Weapons and Tactics Instructor, Amphibious Warfare, Command and Staff, Landing Force Staff Planning, Reserve Components National Security, Naval War College Strategy and Policy, and the Basic and Advanced NATO Electronic Warfare Schools.



COMMANDING OFFICER
Colonel Brian C. Phillips

was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the Marine Corps Reserve under the Platoon Leaders program after graduation from Eastern Kentucky University in May 1983, with a Bachelor of Science in Police Administration and a minor in Business Administration. He completed The Basic School in Quantico, VA in February 1984 and reported to Flight School at NAS Pensacola, FL in March 1984. After training in VT-3 and HT-18, he was designated a Naval Aviator in May 1986. He completed CH-53E training at HMT-301 at MCAS Tustin, CA and reported to the Condors of HMH-464 at MCAS New River, NC in October of 1986.

Promoted to Captain in October 1988, he deployed to the Mediterranean with HMM-162, serving with the 22nd MEU aboard the USS Guadalcanal. A year later, he was transferred to Marine Forces Panama, deploying to that country as the Air Operations Officer and taking part in both Operations Just Cause and Promote Liberty. In April 1990 Captain Phillips was assigned to HMH-461 and participated in Operations Desert Shield, and later, Desert Storm. He took part in Operation Eastern Exit - the non-combatant evacuation of the U.S. embassy in Mogadishu, Somalia - in January 1991. Later that fall, he attended the Weapons and Tactics Instructors course and was designated a Weapons and Tactics Instructor in the CH-53E. Upon completion of WTI, Captain Phillips joined HMM-263, deploying to Norway for Operation Teamwork. Returning to CONUS in 1992, he served as the Detachment Officer in Charge for a three aircraft deployment to the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center - Twentynine Palms, CA in support of two back to back Combined Arms Exercises. He was transferred to HMM-162 in February 1993, once again as part of the 22nd MEU (SOC) aboard the USS Guadalcanal, where he served as Assistant Aircraft Maintenance Officer. In September 1994 Captain Phillips was released from Active Duty and transferred to the Individual Ready Reserve.

While serving in the IRR Captain Phillips was promoted to Major in August 1995, then in August 1998, he entered the Selected Marine Corps Reserves and joined HMH-772. In 1999, Major Phillips once again deployed to Norway in support of Operation Teamwork. He was activated in January 2002 as part of HMH-772, serving in support of Operations Noble Eagle and Enduring Freedom. Two months later, he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and was assigned as the Detachment Officer-in-Charge of a six CH-53E helicopter detachment attached to HMM-263, 24th MEU, deploying to Kosovo as part of the NATO peacekeeping force, and serving in support of exercise Dynamic Response 2002. Upon completion of this exercise, Lieutenant Colonel Phillips rejoined the 24th MEU in Djibouti, Africa as part of the Joint Special Operations Task Force - Crisis Response Element, where they conducted counter terrorism operations in the Horn of Africa, and further participated in Operation Iraqi Freedom. Once again Lieutenant Colonel Phillips was released from Active Duty in January 2004, and returned to a reserve drilling status with HMH-772. In March 2005, Lieutenant Colonel Phillips assumed command of HMH-769 where he presently serves. He was promoted to his current rank in July 2007.

Colonel Phillips's personal decorations include the Distinguished Flying Cross, Air Medal with Combat "V" single action award, Air Medal with numeral "2", Navy Commendation Medal, Navy Achievement Medal and Selected Marine Corps Reserve Medal.

LINEAGE OF THE COMMANDING OFFICERS

HELICOPTER TRANSPORT SQUADRON 769

Col Joseph Candexas

Maj John Q. Owsley

MARINE MEDIUM HELICOPTER SQUADRON 769

LtCol Paul Lucey

1 Apr 62 to 9 May 65

LtCol Michael H. Withers

10 May 65 to 3 Apr 67

Maj Richard O. Clark

4 Apr 67 to 7 Mar 71

LtCol Robert N. Roland

8 Mar 71 to 5 Mar 72

MARINE HEAVY HELICOPTER SQUADRON 769

LtCol Peter W. Defty

6 Mar 72 to 3 Nov 72

LtCol Donald L. Wright

4 Nov 72 to 31 Oct 75

LtCol Wilbur C. McMinn

1 Nov 75 to 31 Dec 77

LtCol Lawrence L. Downey

1 Jan 78 to 31 Dec 79

MARINE HEAVY HELICOPTER SQUADRON 772, DETACHMENT ALPHA

LtCol Quinten R. Meland

1 Jan 80 to 5 Nov 83

LtCol Jerry E. Ward

6 Nov 83 to 9 Nov 86

LtCol Gary J. Hill

10 Nov 86 to 6 Nov 88

LtCol Robert P. Wray

7 Nov 88 to 1 May 89

LtCol Thomas J. Miller

2 May 89 to 15 Dec 91

LtCol Jerry K. Johnson

16 Dec 91 to 3 Dec 94

MARINE HEAVY HELICOPTER SQUADRON 769

Col Thomas Q. O'Hara

4 Dec 94 to 5 Oct 96

LtCol Timothy M. Delaney

6 Oct 96 to 4 Oct 98

LtCol William L. McMullen

5 Oct 98 to 9 Mar 01

LtCol James D. McGinley

10 Mar 01 to 6 Mar 03

LtCol Richard D. Mullen

7 Mar 03 to 6 Mar 05

Col Brian C. Phillips

7 Mar 05 to 2 Aug 08

Lineage of the Squadron

15 April 1958

*Activated as Helicopter Transport Squadron 769
Naval Air Station Oakland, California*

1 July 1961

Relocated to Naval Air Station Alameda, California

1 April 1962

Redesignated as Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 769

1 September 1971

Redesignated Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 769

1 June 1980

Redesignated as Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 772 Det A

27 November 1990

*Activated for Support of Combat Operations during
Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm
and the Liberation of Kuwait*

9 May 1991

Participated in Operation Sea Angel in Bangladesh

1 April 1993

Redesignated once again as Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 769

1 May 1996

Relocated to Marine Corps Air Station El Toro, California

20 May 1999

Relocated to Edwards Air Force Base, California

26 January 2002

Activated in Support of Operation Enduring Freedom

5 January 2004

Activated in Support of Operation Enduring Freedom IV and V

2 August 2008

Deactivated aboard Edwards Air Force Base, California

History of the Squadron

HMH-769 was originally established as Helicopter Transport Squadron 769 on 15 April 1958, based at Naval Air Station Oakland, CA, and flying the HUP-2. In April 1959 the squadron began flying the Sikorsky H-34. The unit was redesignated as Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 769 on 1 April 1961 and relocated to Naval Air Station Alameda, CA in July of that same year. The squadron flew the H-34 until 1971 when it transitioned the Sikorsky CH-53A. The unit was redesignated as Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 769 on September 1980 and later designated as Marine Heavy Helicopter Squadron 772 Detachment A. In April 1990, as HMH-772 Det A, the squadron became the first Marine unit to fly the RH-53D Sea Stallion, a former minesweeper used to replace the CH-53A. With its minesweeping gear removed the RH-53D proved to be a powerful replacement to the aging CH-53A aircraft.

HMH-769 was activated for Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm on 27 November 1990, and deployed to Saudi Arabia in support of combat operations in securing the liberation of Kuwait. HMH-769 operated from Al Jubayl and the expeditionary combat base "Lonesome Dove" while supporting the assault. During the return from the Persian Gulf, while aboard the USS Tarawa, HMH-769 helicopters were involved in Operation Sea Angel – a humanitarian relief operation in Bangladesh – after a devastating hurricane killed over 10,000 people in that country.

On 1 May 1996 the unit relocated from Alameda to Marine Corps Air Station El Toro, C.A. The squadron received its first CH-53E Super Stallions on 23 August 1996, replacing the RH-53Ds with the newer, more powerful airframe. Three years later, the squadron relocated to Edwards Air Force Base, arriving in May 1999.

Following the tragic events of September 11th, HMH-769 was activated on 26 January 2002, serving for five months in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. During this activation the squadron deployed two aircraft and 17 Marines in the first ever reserve CH-53E augmentation of an Active Forces MEU, deploying with the 11th MEU (SOC) to Djibouti in the Horn of Africa. The Roadhogs were activated again in January 2004 and in March of that year deployed to Bagram, Afghanistan for seven months in support of Combined Joint Task Forces 180/76 for Operation Enduring Freedom 4 and 5.

On 2 April 2007, Headquarters Marine Corps released Marine Corps Bulletin 5400, directing the deactivation of the squadron, with a completion date of no later than 30 September 2008. The following year saw a flurry of activity as the squadron marched toward this milestone, transferring aircraft and personnel consistently throughout the year. On 18 July 2008, the squadron transferred its last two aircraft to HMH-461 at Marine Corps Air Station New River, NC, enabling the squadron to formally deactivate in today's ceremony.

SQUADRON PERSONNEL

2 April 2007 – 2 August 2008

COMMAND HEADQUARTERS

Commanding Officer
Col Brian C. Phillips

Executive Officer
LtCol Ernest H. Henderson II

Sergeant Major
SgtMaj Rene M. Perez II

OFFICERS

LtCol Sarah M. Deal
LtCol Troy Fuller

LtCol Douglas B. Jacobson

LtCol Andrew J. McCain
LtCol Jeffrey M. Miglionico

Maj Dwaine D. Lamigo
Maj Jodi T. Maroney

Maj Theodore E. Martin
Maj David Montesano
Maj Unn K. Solberg

Maj Brietta L. Walker
Maj Don M. White

CWO-4 Jonathon J. Fifer
CWO-4 Noel A. Tabares

CWO-2 Stevan F. Lopez III
CWO-2 Robert J. Kendall Jr

STAFF NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS

MGySgt John A. Franco

MGySgt Harold D. Nikkel Jr

1stSgt Mark G. Wheelon

MSgt John M. Ellis
MSgt Jeffrey A. Emerson

MSgt John M. Miles

GySgt Donald O. Anderson
GySgt James A. Boisse

GySgt Timothy E. Carter
GySgt Buster Evans Jr
GySgt Sean M. Folan

GySgt Vicente F. Gonzalez
GySgt Orsy A. Quintanilla

SSgt Tomas Aguilera Jr
SSgt Steven A. Akers
SSgt William O. Aquino
SSgt Leon M. Banta
SSgt Brett E. Baumer
SSgt Jason M. Bayonne
SSgt Toby L. Bossard
SSgt Scott A. Brown

SSgt Gabriel Cruz
SSgt Sean M. Eslinger
SSgt Michael H. Gámartin
SSgt James H. Haughey
SSgt Victor J. Jensen Jr
SSgt Leonardo Z. Lopez
SSgt Jesus J. Luna
SSgt Frank W. Kirkland

SSgt John E. McCoy
SSgt Enrique Mexicano Jr
SSgt Jorge Minjare
SSgt Salvador Nune
SSgt Justin R. Olson
SSgt Michael F. Sasse
SSgt William S. Steven
SSgt Quinton D. Taylor

NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS

Sgt Ernesto Aldrete
Sgt Sean M. Allen
Sgt Arturo Alonso Jr
Sgt Kevin O. Beaulieu
Sgt Jason A. Board
Sgt David M. Bockey
Sgt David A. Calderonmelo
Sgt Corey B. Colbert
Sgt Jesse A. Cole
Sgt Paul W. Coleman
SSgt Gabriel E. Diaz
Sgt Eric M. Dorch
Sgt David A. Dunn
Sgt Dagoberto Espinoza
Sgt Cecilio Garcia
Sgt Samuel D. Gray
Sgt John J. Grigsby III

Sgt Alvaro Guzman
Sgt William S. Hincks
Sgt Steven J. Knudson
Sgt Adam A. Kusnierski Jr
Sgt Timothy J. Legros
Sgt Ryan E. Liggatt
Sgt Nathaniel H. Luchner
Sgt Anthony G. Marion
Sgt Lisandro E. Martinez
Sgt Merritt J. Mays
Sgt Anthony J. McLaughlin
Sgt Sergio L. Mendoza
Sgt Junious L. Morgan
Sgt Numa P. Perez
Sgt Chad M. Pluimer
Sgt Victor H. Pozo
Sgt Christie M. Puentes

Sgt Marlon M. Ramos
Sgt Juan C. Reales
Sgt Robert S. Rogers Jr
Sgt Jimmie Romero
Sgt Edward A. Sanders Jr
Sgt Roberto C. Santos
Sgt Diego Segura
Sgt Kamaal S. Smith
Sgt James M. Todd
Sgt Joel D. Vanzant
Sgt Darren Vanlangenberg
Sgt Terry L. Ward
Sgt Robert D. Warfield
Sgt Dakin K. Werneburg
Sgt Luke J. Worth
Sgt Bruce L. Yam

Cpl Oscar A. Albor
Cpl Jonathan L. Bush
Cpl Melvin A. Carballogonzalez
Cpl Dominick S. Castro II
Cpl Paul W. Coleman
Cpl Frank J. Conrad
Cpl Mark E. Day
Cpl Brad L. Dickson
Cpl John M. Dipia
Cpl Luis E. Dominguez
Cpl Cameron L. Duncan

Cpl Juan P. Escobar
Cpl Juanito Faz
Cpl Joshua J. Garcia
Cpl Jonathan A. Granatella
Cpl Keegan O. Harden
Cpl Matthew R. Hamilton
Cpl Raymond E. Hughes
Cpl Robert G. Hulst
Cpl Tyler W. Johnson
Cpl Timothy A. Labarbara
Cpl Lorenzo Luna

Cpl Christopher E. Rodgers
Cpl Hector Salas
Cpl Alma D. Santesvargas
Cpl Gerardo J. Santos
Cpl Jesus A. Silva
Cpl Larry R. Smith Jr
Cpl Joshua A. Stupakewicz
Cpl Elizabeth C. Trujillo
Cpl Shawn K. Warren
Cpl Natalie R. Weiser
Cpl Enrique Zamora

FUTURE NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS

LCpl Max A. Alfaro
LCpl Bradley R. Arnone
LCpl Andres R. Arriola
LCpl Kaleb W. Bellamy
LCpl Brandon L. Bennett
LCpl Nelson A. Bohorquez
LCpl Scott W. Byam
LCpl Darley F. Canolozano
LCpl Jimmy A. Castillejo
LCpl Cuauhtemoc O. Contreras
LCpl Ricardo N. Cornejo
LCpl Oscar A. Cota
LCpl Eric D. Derrington
LCpl Andrew M. Dilgardpadgett

LCpl Daniel D. Enriquez
LCpl Edgar A. Escobar
LCpl Ismael Esquivelenteria
LCpl Michael R. Fechter
LCpl Joshua L. Flores
LCpl Javier Garcia
LCpl Joshua J. Garcia
LCpl Evan Guyant
LCpl Anthony D. Hamilton
LCpl Blake R. Heath
LCpl Derek T. Hulchison
LCpl David R. Maravilla
LCpl Travis M. Mason
LCpl Sergio A. Melendez

LCpl Juan C. Ornelas
LCpl Jesus M. Ortega
LCpl Ravuth B. Pheng
LCpl Ryan L. Plock
LCpl Sonia V. Quinones
LCpl Rigoberto Reyeserendez
LCpl Manuel E. Sanchez
LCpl Sol N. Schillings
LCpl Andrew N. Shreves
LCpl Richard C. Smith
LCpl Martin Soto
LCpl Robert P. Taylor
LCpl Anthony R. Torero
LCpl Diana Zarate

PFC Jose R. Anzaldo
PFC Zachary S. Closser
PFC Brian J. Hines

PFC William Huynh
PFC Saul Pena
PFC Savino Perez Jr

PFC Eben E. Thomas
Pvt Luis E. Guevara
Pvt Robert J. Spears

LOW FLIGHT

Oh, I've slipped the surly Bonds of Earth
And hovered out of Ground Effect on Semi-rigid Blades;
Earthward I've auto'ed and met the rising Brush of Non-paved Terrain;
And done a thousand Things you would never care to,
Skidded and dropped and flared low in the heat soaked Roar.
Confined there, I've chased the earthbound Traffic
And lost the Race to insignificant Headwinds;
Forward and up a little in Ground Effect
I've topped the General's Hedge with drooping Turns
Where never Skyhawk or even Phantom flew.
Shaking and pulling Collective,
I've lumbered the low untrusspassed Halls of Victor Airways,
Put out my Hand,
and touched a Tree.
~ Anonymous ~



REMEMBERING THE FORGOTTEN MECHANIC

Through the history of world aviation many names have come to the fore
Great deeds of the past in our memory will last, as they're joined by more and more

When man first started his labor in his quest to conquer the sky
he was designer, mechanic and pilot, and he built a machine that would fly

But somehow the order got twisted, and then in the public's eye
the only man that could be seen was the man who knew how to fly

The pilot was everyone's hero, he was brave, he was bold, he was grand,
as he stood by his battered old bi-plane with his goggles and helmet in hand

To be sure these pilots all earned it, to fly you have to have guts
And they blazed their names in the hall of fame on wings with bailing wire struts

But for each of these flying heroes there were thousands of little renown,
and these were the men who worked on the planes but kept their feet on the ground

We all know the name of Lindbergh, and we've read of his flight to fame
But think, if you can, of his maintenance man, can you remember his name?

And think of our war time heroes, Gabreski, Jabara and Scott
Can you tell me the names of their Crew Chiefs? A thousand to one you cannot

Now pilots are highly trained people, and wings are not easily won
But without the work of the maintenance man our pilots would march with a gun

So when you see mighty aircraft as they mark their way through the air,
the grease stained man with the wrench in his hand is the man who put them there

~ Anonymous ~



THE MARINES' HYMN

From the Halls of Montezuma,
To the Shores of Tripoli:
We fight our country's battles
In the air, on land and sea;
First to fight for right and freedom
And to keep our honor clean;
We are proud to claim the title of
UNITED STATES MARINE.

Our flag's unfurled to every breeze
From dawn to setting sun;
We have fought in every clime and place
Where we could take a gun;
In the snow of far off northern lands
And in sunny tropic scenes;
You will find us always on the job –
THE UNITED STATES MARINES.

Here's health to you and to our Corps
Which we are proud to serve;
In many a strife we've fought for life,
And never lost our nerve;
If the Army and the Navy
Ever look on Heaven's scenes;
They will find the streets are guarded by
UNITED STATES MARINES.





*"Fair Winds and
Following Seas"*
-CO-