



Commanding Officer, Marine Aircraft Group 24 Intent and Guidance to Commanders & Staff



As we begin our relationship together it is important that we all have a shared understanding of the mission, intent and priorities of this MAG. This guidance expands upon what I published to the entire Group on mission, intent and priorities. This intent and guidance, along with direct guidance, which will develop through our daily contact will provide the basis for your actions and your decision making process. It's also important for you to understand what's important to me and how I do business.

MISSION & INTENT: The Mission of Marine Aircraft Group 24 is to provide combat-ready, expeditionary aviation forces capable of short-notice, worldwide employment in support of Marine Air Ground Task Force operations. The overarching intent of everything we do at MAG-24 is Mission first, Marines and Sailors always. Within that, my number one priority is maintaining readiness to accomplish all assigned missions while preserving our most precious assets—our individual Marines and Sailors. The greatest change in all of Marine Aviation over the next few years is happening right here in MAG-24. Though we are going through a major transition in the form of new missions, units, platforms, and capabilities, we are still a part of America's expeditionary force in readiness. This is particularly important as the Marine Corps reorients on the Pacific and we return to our expeditionary and amphibious roots. We must be ready, responsive, relevant and always prepared to respond to today's crisis with today's force today!

PRIORITIES: The below are our main priorities—readiness and mission accomplishment is number one; the others are not in a specific order but must be enduring in all that we do. We will have other priorities over time, and they will take on many characteristics—many will be resource-based and all will be based on good sense and best practice. As new priorities and decisions are required, they will always be based on what is best for the Marine Corps, what is best for MAG-24, and what is best for our Marines, Sailors and Families. Don't assume or get trapped into thinking that everything from the Commander is a priority—I will let you know when and if something is a priority. If in doubt, ask. Otherwise use this guidance and your professional judgment to prioritize within your command or staff to determine what is best.

- **Readiness and Mission Accomplishment.** It's all about maintaining readiness to accomplish our assigned missions while preserving our most precious assets—our individual Marines and Sailors. We will complete our mission in OEF, III MEF & 1st MAW tasking, frag missions, Aviation Plan implementation, and any other assigned tasks. We must always strive for improved individual, personal, unit and family readiness.
- **Preserve the Spirit of the Marine Corps.** Simply put this is who we are and what we stand for as United States Marines. We will be known as a Group that maintains strict adherence to standards and does the right thing at the right time for the right reason. This effort requires visible, engaged and assertive leadership at all levels and constant reinforcement of our core values of honor, courage and commitment.
- **Cultivate an Expeditionary Mindset.** MAG-24 must be an Expeditionary Force in Readiness and transition from a Rotational force to a Ready MAG.
- **Ensure successful implementation of the Marine Corps Aviation Plan.** Lead and manage the required change to ensure successful implementation of the Marine Corps Aviation Plan at MAG-24.

MAG-24 EXECUTIVE OFFICER: The XO is my right hand man—my valued advisor, confidante and second in command. Assume that any and all direction from the XO has come from me. He has my highest trust and confidence and is charged with coordinating the staff and implementing my guidance. The XO will be an invaluable source for checking command climate and my position on issues.

MAG-24 SERGEANT MAJOR: The SgtMaj is my other right-hand man—my senior enlisted leader, valued advisor and confidante. Assume that any and all direction from the SgtMaj has come from me. He has my highest trust and confidence and is charged with implementing my guidance. I will count on the SgtMaj for his sage advice on the full range of enlisted Marine and Sailor issues. The SgtMaj will also be an invaluable source for checking command climate and my position on issues.

COMMANDERS: Commanders maintain a special relationship with me and always have direct access. I do, however, expect commanders to work well with my staff and with each other. The same goes for my staff in their conduct with COs and staffs.

STAFF: THE MAG staff will work closely with higher and subordinate staffs and assist in implementing my guidance and help me support the Squadrons in generating effective and efficient sorties. Staff relationships are incredibly important.

OTHER IMPORTANT THINGS AND COMMANDERS' BUSINESS:

Some areas I consider Commanders' business: Communications, readiness of all kinds, safety and force preservation, priorities, risk, challenges, presence, policy, standards, role of staff and XO, senior enlisted leaders, new joins, performance evaluations, NCO & junior officer development, SNCO and field grade development and institutional responsibilities.

Policy: Policy decisions for MAG-24 come from one source, the commander. I have published several separate policy letters. I need you to read them, have your Marines and Sailors read them, and most importantly discuss the topics and help me ensure the entire MAG lives by the spirit and intent of these policies—this is important.

MAG-24 will work as a Team. Team building and teamwork will be the key to our success as we change in composition and transition to a ready MAG and expeditionary force in readiness. We are one Group—I need everyone in the MAG to work as a team whether within your units, between units, or between staffs. As each Marine, Sailor, or unit joins our MAG, we will welcome them with open arms and positive mentoring—team building must be continuous. Teamwork extends beyond our MAG. We will work well with fellow III MEF units and Marine Corps Base Hawaii. Our reputation will be of a MAG that is easy to work with and that gets things done.

Relationships matter! This goes hand-in-hand with teamwork and team building. Relationships will form the foundation of how we conduct business as a MAG. Subordinate staffs and organizations within will model the same attitudes and relationships, as do their leaders. It is absolutely critical that we all cultivate and maintain good working relationships with other commands and outside agencies, particularly with MCBH, 1st MAW, 3rd Marines, the other III MEF tenant battalions on base, other III MEF units, and certainly between the subordinate commands of MAG-24. All relationships will possess the foundation of trust, dignity, courtesy and respect.

Maintain effective communications. Maintain communications up, down and laterally throughout the chain of command. Keep the chain of command, your Marines, and your families informed. My critical information requirements or things that concern me the most are those that pose a threat to our Group in terms of safety or force preservation, can prevent us from accomplishing our mission, or that will reflect badly on the Marine Corps. Remember, “what do I know, who needs to know, and have I told them?”

Shared ideas and perspectives. I will seek your counsel often and am looking for candid honest advice and ideas, not for what I want to hear. I need all of you to support me in creating and maintaining an environment that fosters balanced professional excellence, treats everyone regardless of rank or position with dignity and respect, and fosters an open, candid and honest atmosphere of shared ideas and perspectives. We need this to manage and lead the change that MAG-24 faces.

Maintain balanced excellence. Balanced excellence leads to combat effectiveness. We must constantly work to balance excellence in our mission essential tasks, all forms of readiness, the spectrum of foundational Marine and Sailor issues that build will, mettle, trust and esprit, and being brilliant in the basics. I need leaders at all levels to help strike this balance.

Have fun. Everyone deserves to enjoy coming to work each day. An important contributing of balanced excellence is leaving time for fun and relaxation. We need to work together to maintain balance between the hard work we must do each day and having fun. Have fun both on and off-duty, but please, always employ risk management and moderation.

THOUGHTS AND PREFERENCES ON DOING BUSINESS:

Standards: We will maintain ruthless enforcement of our standards and not tolerate activities or behavior that violate our core values. Some specific issues and crimes I will not tolerate are hazing, substance abuse, equal opportunity violations and sexual assault. The erosion of standards across the institution is putting the entire Marine Corps at risk.

Engaged leadership and decision-making: I prefer to push decision making down to the lowest levels. All of our leaders are empowered to make decisions in the scope of commander's guidance and intent. This requires engaged and often intrusive leadership to work but goes a long way to educate and to develop our young leaders. This is also how we train and develop our subordinates to do our job. We will also use our force preservation councils to complement our engaged, anticipatory leadership, so we can identify and help those Sailors and Marines identified as high-risk.

Professional Education: We must continue an active and effective PME program at all levels within the MAG. PME and required training is important. Make time for your Marines and Sailors to attend and complete the required training and PME. I will always look for and welcome opportunities to conduct informal PMEs to include those coupled with social events. The spirit of our Corps depends on it.

Taking care of our stuff: Taking care of our scarce resources, aircraft, equipment and spaces and maintaining them in a neat and professional appearance are always important. This is really a matter of taking pride in where we work and live and is a reflection of whom we are. Everyone tends to be happier and more productive and generally prefer to work in a neat and clean environment. We will hold those that don't adhere to these standards accountable. It is important to me and is particularly important in these times of fiscal austerity.

Professional and social events: These are very important to our culture. Please encourage these events within Squadrons, Dets and staff sections. You need to make time for these events. Invite me—I'll make as many as possible. It is great to couple social events with PME's whenever possible. It is also important to participate in our professional organizations such as Marine Corps Aviation Association events.

Admin and Communication: Do things right the first time—although this is a truism, it bears repeating. If we don't have time to do things right the first time, how will we have time to fix them?

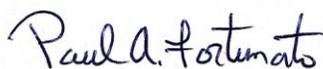
- Be aware of potential issues that will gain visibility outside of the MAG and provide the command element a heads-up and any background. I don't like surprises.
- Push sensitive or important issues to the command element; don't wait for the pull.
- Take ownership and responsibility when you prepare correspondence and briefs and be accountable for facts and recommendations.
- I prefer problems and issues be presented with options and recommendations. Don't, however, let this slow you down in passing bad news—it doesn't get better with time.
- I prefer informal briefings with a focus on info—I'm fine with the tools and charts that you use to manage your organization. If I need a new format, I'll let you know. If a brief is going outside the command I'll need a formal brief that can be used as a pre-brief to me. I prefer short, concise e-mails.
- Be careful with e-mail—it is a great tool for passing information but is not a substitute for leadership. Prepare e-mails with correctness and guard against emotion—you never know who will forward or receive your e-mail. I may bcc you on e-mail on occasion for your situational awareness. Never forward or share an e-mail that I send to you as a bcc. If I send you an e-mail to pass info or tasking, please acknowledge receipt and let me know you have it for action—a simple "thanks" or "got it for action" will suffice. I will generally follow-up in person. Please don't send me e-mail with the read receipt turned on...
- Make deadlines to HHQ and external agencies. If we're going to be late, let me or the XO know, so we can help coordinate vice deal in damage control. If your working something for me and it is taking longer then you think, just let me know—this is so much better than going silent and hoping that I forget...
- Ensure timely and accurate awards, fitness reports and correspondence.

My routine and what you can expect from me:

- I will use mission type orders as much as possible and let you work the how. I generally will use trust tactics here and not ask a lot about the details, but I expect you to know the details if I ask.
- I will be out and about a lot to visit and see our Marines, Sailors, equipment and spaces. Expect it. I prefer not to be office bound or a slave to a specific schedule. I will often be with the SgtMaj and use this as an opportunity to get the pulse of the MAG. I want our Marines and Sailors to know they can always talk to me about anything—personal problems, new ideas, gripes, etc.
- I will ask a lot of questions and maintain a sense of professional curiosity around the MAG.
- I will often check on things because of this professional curiosity and interest, but I also find that things I check on tend to improve...
- I may think out loud in the course of my visits or our meetings. Don't take these as taskings or new priorities—I prefer to discuss before we take action. That being said, I often have a tendency to see and decide...the XO and SgtMaj will help keep me in check.
- I generally have a good memory and am a big believer in trusting instincts.
- I will keep long hours, but I don't expect you to alter your routine to match mine; often very early or late is when I catch up on admin. I don't expect you to check out with me each day, but it is helpful to check with the XO at the end in case there are any developing issues or final questions for the day.
- I will block time for PT generally mid-morning and when necessary an hour or two for admin/executive time.
- I will always have an open door for commanders and principal staff but please check with the XO on timing and as a courtesy to him.

I believe in all of you, and I want MAG-24 to be the best place to serve in the Marine Corps. I will do my best to provide you with the information, assistance and leadership you deserve. Be supportive, take care of each other, and always treat each other with dignity, respect and professionalism. Together, as a Team, we can accomplish any mission and ensure the continued success of MAG-24 to our Corps. Mission first, Marines & Sailors always.

Semper Fidelis,



Paul A. Fortunato
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