



May Speaker | VMFA-214 Commanding Officer



Lieutenant Colonel Christopher J. Kelly, USMC Commanding Officer Marine Attack Squadron VMFA-214

Lieutenant Colonel Christopher J Kelly is a 2004 graduate of Sacred Heart University. While completing his undergraduate degree in Criminal Justice, he enrolled in the Platoon Leaders Course and attended Officer Candidate School in 2001 and 2003. Upon graduation from Sacred Heart, Lt. Col. Kelly was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in May 2004.

Lt. Col. Kelly attended The Basic School in 2004 and in May 2005, he reported to Naval Air Station Pensacola, Florida, for flight training. After training at NAS Whiting Field, Florida, and NAS Meridian, Mississippi, Lt. Col. Kelly was designated a Naval Aviator in October 2007 and selected to fly the EA-6B Prowler. From November 2007 to August 2009, he trained with the EA-6B Fleet Replacement Squadron, VAQ-129 aboard NAS Whidbey Island, WA.

In September 2009, Lt. Col. Kelly reported to VMAQ-1 located at MCAS Cherry Point. During this time, Lt. Col. Kelly deployed twice to Bagram Airbase, Afghanistan, in support of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM and once to Aviano Airbase in support of Operation UNIFIED PROTECTOR. Following the second deployment to Bagram, Lt. Col. Kelly was selected to attend the Weapons and Tactics Instructor (WTI) course. During this tour, Lt. Col. Kelly served as a Mission Planning Officer, Aviation Safety Officer, Director of Safety and Standardization, and S-1 Officer in Charge.

In March 2013, Lt. Col. Kelly reported to MCB Quantico, Virginia, to serve in Manpower and Reserve Affairs, Manpower Management Officer Assignments, as the Fixed Wing Company Grade monitor. While serving in this billet, Lt. Col. Kelly was selected to transition to the F35B.

In June 2015, Lt. Col. Kelly reported to VMFAT-501 at MCAS Beaufort, South Carolina, to begin transition training for the F-35B. In June 2016, Lt. Col. Kelly reported to VMFA-211 at MCAS Yuma, Arizona, where he served as the Assistant Operations Officer until January 2018. In January 2018, Lt. Col. Kelly moved down the flight line to stand up the next F-35 squadron in MAG-13, VMFA-122. During his time with VMFA-122 he served as the Aviation Maintenance Officer, and Executive Officer. In June 2020, Lt. Col. Kelly was selected to assume command of VMFA-214 and transition the squadron from operating AV-8B's to F-35B's.

From June 2020 until June 2021, Lt. Col. Kelly deployed as the Aviation Combat Element Executive Officer and F-35B Detachment Officer in Charge for the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit. During this deployment onboard the USS MAKIN ISLAND, the 15th MEU supported Operations OCTAVE QUARTZ, INHERENT RESOLVE, and FREEDOM'S SENTINEL.

Lt. Col. Kelly has over 2,000 flight hours in the EA-6B and F-35B. His personal awards include the Meritorious Service Medal, Air Medal with 10 Strike/Flight Awards, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with gold star, and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal.



SEMBAWANG, Singapore | The Arleigh Burke-class destroyer USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) makes a brief stop for logistics in Singapore. Fitzgerald is on a scheduled deployment in the U.S. 7th Fleet Area of Operations to enhance interoperability through alliances and partnerships while serving as a ready-response force in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific region. (U.S.Navy/L. Hull-Ryde)

By Commander, Task Force 71/Destroyer Squadron 15

U.S. Navy Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Fitzgerald (DDG 62) and a P-8A Poseidon maritime patrol and reconnaissance aircraft (MPRA), from Patrol Squadron (VP) 47, joined with ships, aircraft and personnel from India and numerous other navies to begin Exercise Milan 2022, in the Bay of Bengal, Feb. 25.

This year marks the first time U.S. has participated in Exercise Milan. Milan in Hindi means "meeting". The first Exercise Milan took place in 1995 with four navies and has taken place every two years since. This is the first Exercise Milan since 2018 as the 2020 iteration was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This year's exercise is focused on enhancing professional interaction between professional navies and gaining experience in multilateral large force operations at sea.

The exercise is scheduled to include a harbor phase followed by a sea phase where the ships will focus on a variety of high-end tactical training, maneuvering drills, air-defense exercises, submarine familiarization, multinational replenishment-at-sea, communications drills, gunnery exercise, and joint warfighting scenarios.

"Milan provides an opportunity for like-minded navies that sharing a common vision of a more stable, open, and prosperous Indo-Pacific, to operate and train alongside one another," said Cmdr. David Catterall, commanding officer, USS Fitzgerald. "We are grateful for India's hosting this important event and their efforts to harmonize our contributions to the region, and look forward to ensuring future engagements to build strong alliances and partnerships."

Exercise Milan includes forces from Australia, Bangladesh, France, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Myanmar, Seychelles, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States, and Vietnam. The last multinational exercise the U.S. participated in the Indian Ocean was MALABAR, in Oct. 2021, a QUAD maritime exercise with the Royal Australian Navy, Indian Navy, Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force, and U.S. Royal Australian Navy ship HMAS Arunta (FFH 151) transited with Fitzgerald during a group sail ahead of Exercise Milan commencing.

Fitzgerald is underway conducting operations in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific, while assigned to Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 15, the Navy's largest forward-deployed DESRON and the U.S. 7th Fleet's principal surface force.

The "Golden Swordsmen" of VP-47 are part of Commander Task Force (CTF) 72, are

stationed in Whidbey Island, Washington, and are currently deployed to Misawa Air Base in Aomori, Japan. Throughout the deployment, they will be conducting maritime patrol and reconnaissance and theater outreach operations within the 7th Fleet area of operations.

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 to make sure we have a delicious T-bone on the grill for you.

Advocating on Behalf of the Sea Services

Sea Service Updates

Despite the Easter/Passover Congressional recess, there was a lot of activity regarding the sea services as the [Navy has released its Shipbuilding Plan](#). The plan offers options for the future fleet with one option resulting in the formation of a 316 ship fleet and another resulting in the formation of a 327 ship fleet and a third option resulting in the formation of a 367 ship fleet (all by year 2052). Some key takeaways are that there are significant decommissionings in the coming years, the shipbuilding industrial base is not expected to accommodate more than 10 ships per year, and there will be lag years in which shipyards will have significantly decreased demand potentially leading to layoffs of skilled workers.

Members of Congress were quick to [express their skepticism](#) of the plan with Congressmen Wittman and Rogers (members of the House Armed Services Committee) releasing a statement describing the plan as "inadequate" and saying it will "undermine key naval missions".

U.S. Navy Offering \$25,000 Enlistment Bonus to New Enlistees

The United States Navy Recruiting Command is offering an enlistment bonus of \$25,000 to anyone who enlists active duty. The Navy is the only U.S. military branch currently offering this high of an enlistment bonus for any new enlistee. Depending on an enlistee's rating, the enlistment bonus could be as high as \$50,000.

To learn more about the range of bonuses and benefits the U.S. Navy offers, [visit the Navy's website](#).

Sea Air Space Exposition Recap Videos

We're always looking for new ways to encourage membership, and wish to share with you a simple way that you can share and showcase the Navy League's mission to serve the men and women of the sea services.

[Sea-Air-Space 2022 Day 1](#)

[Sea-Air-Space 2022 Day 2](#)

[Sea-Air-Space 2022 Day 3](#)

President's Message



Fellow Navy Leaguers,

Spring is winding down, and the west Valley's west winds have kept some of the heat away, but I've turned my a/c on, which means that summer is on its way. As we prepare for the summer months, you're likely looking ahead to a 3-day weekend which will kick off summer. Celebrations are important, but this "holiday" is a day for mourning and honoring the military members who have fought and died for our nation's freedoms. Wherever you are, I urge you to contemplate, and commemorate those who sacrificed their all, and pay your personal tribute to the brave souls who died in service to our nation.

Next Tuesday will be NAFEC's Captain Perkins' last dinner with us before his retirement. On May 10th Naval Air Facility El Centro will host a Change of Command whereby Captain William Perkins will be relieved by Captain Michael Lee. We send with Captain Perkins and his wife Melissa our best wishes for a long and fulfilling retirement. We will also welcome Captain Lee as he assumes command of the Pearl of the Desert. Be sure to join us as we wish Captain Perkins Fair Winds and Following Seas next Tuesday.

We are still planning a mid-May Barracks Bash for our Marines at Lake Martinez. I'll be soliciting volunteers to help put on a pollo asada BBQ lunch. Your help will be appreciated as we give these Marines a well-deserved day of rest, relaxation, and fill their bellies with great food.

I have asked LtCol Kelly of our newly minted VMFA-214 to speak to us. This is not a repeat of last month by any means -- we have much to learn about the F-35B and I hope you'll plan to come out and meet more of the squadron members.

We're standing by to take your dinner reservation. If you're 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.

Until we "Meat" again next Tuesday.

Ted Gallinat, President
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Upcoming T-Bone Dinners and Events

MAY 3 | Navy League Dinner | 6:30 pm

MAY | VMFA-214 Barracks Bash & BBQ | Date TBD

JUN 7 | Navy League Dinner | 6:30 pm

JUL 4 | Independence Day!

5 | Navy League Dinner | DARK -No Meeting

Follow Us Whenever, and Wherever We Go!



Welcome New & Renewing Members!

Alan Chan
Grace Soto-Chan
Martin D. Fitzerka

Spencer McNamara
GySgt Jeremy Tyree

Ready to Join?

Besides being a part of a great organization that serves others.
You receive benefits too!

Membership now open to all active duty service members

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Our Supported Units



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EL CENTRO



US NAVY BLUE ANGELS FLIGHT
DEMONSTRATION SQUADRON



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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VMFA-214

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