

What I will remember about VMGR-452, “the Yankees”



Aboard Stewart Air National Guard Base, NY, on the afternoon of December 2nd, 2022, the colors were folded & the orders were read to “deactivate” Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron (VMGR) – 452, Marine Air Group (MAG)-49, 4th Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW), Marine Forces Reserve (MFR). According to the Marine Corps’ 2022 Aviation Plan this was

necessary to make way for a new active duty KC-130 squadron, VMGR-153, to respond to increased threats emerging in the Pacific.

But what I will remember about VMGR-452, the “Yankees”, goes back to the beginning. I will remember the “activation” of the second Marine Reserve KC-130 squadron in 1988. I recall the pride the first Commanding Officer, then, Lieutenant Colonel Jack Bergman, showed as he assumed command. Years later, I still remember the pride he shared with me as he developed the squadron operationally and built their camaraderie



I will remember the pride the two Marine reserve squadrons, VMGR-234, based at Joint Base Ft. Worth, TX and 452 shared when called upon to support Operation Northern Watch, following Desert Shield/Desert Storm. The squadrons flew out of Incirlik Air Base, Turkey each morning to a northern Iraqi airbase to be in position to support Combat Search and Air Rescue operations in the event a Coalition aircraft was shot down. The comradery was so strong we created our own unique patch VMGR-686!



I will remember when serving as the Commanding Officer of VMGR-234, 2000 – 2002, the cooperation between two reserve squadrons to support East Coast Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) operations. Until this point, only active duty KC-

130 squadrons supported the MEU. But we demonstrated how the Reserves could in fact support the MEU through their workups and deployment.

I will remember the pride I had in 2004 at watching VMGR-452 KC-130 aircraft take-off to support the 1st Marine Division combat operations in Iraq. These take-offs were from makeshift dirt landing strips, or Iraqi highways. A smile came over my face when I recalled "...KC-130s would never be forward deployed." I will remember the pride the BattleHerk Air Group showed when I spoke to them at their "Dining-In" during the war in Iraq.

I will remember the pride I had when my former VMGR-234 Operations Officer, LtCol Bradley James became the Commanding Officer of VMGR-452.



I will remember the dedication demonstrated by those '452 Marines who drilled with the squadron. After landing at LaGuardia, Newark or JFK it was another nearly 90 min drive to check into the barracks, if you wanted to call them that. I will remember the pride each Marine showed during those drill weekends at being a member of the "Yankees."

Yes, the "Yankees" are no more, they are now a footnote in the history in Marine Aviation. But what a footnote! The contribution of those who served in the squadron were noteworthy. Former squadron members should stand tall and be proud of what they accomplished in the 34 years in which they contributed to the defense of OUR country.