

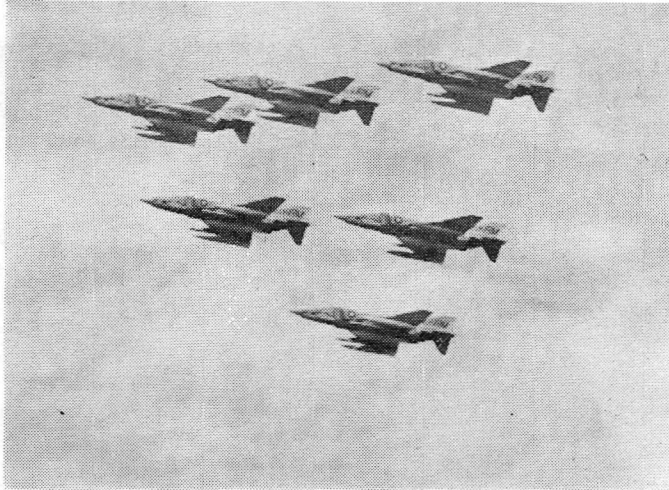
Torii Teller

MCAS Iwakuni Weekly

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25,000 MISSIONS LATER VMCJ-1 COMES HOME





VMCJ-1 COMES HOME

By Cpl. Mike Schutte

The first flight of six RF-4B Phantoms to return to Iwakuni from Danang swept low over the air station in this delta formation. Except for its needle-nose, the RF-4B is little different in outward appearances than its fighter-bomber brother.

**Photos by
Sgt. Junebug Clark
and
Cpl. Mark Montalvo**

ON THE COVER: Sgt. Junebug Clark captured this exceptional photo of Lt. Col. Manning debarking from his RF-4B with a Leica camera sporting a 20mm wide-angle lens. He used Kodak Tri-X film, set his camera at 1-250th second, and used a shutter opening of f22.

Lt. Col. Manning was greeted on his arrival by a host of air station and 1st MAW (Rear) dignitaries, including the air station commander, Col. William R. Quinn (*right*), and the commanding officer of VMCJ-1's new parent group, MAG-12, Col. James R. Weaver, (*center*). Also on hand was Brig. Gen. William G. Johnson, the Wing (Rear) CG.

The "eyes and ears" of the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing returned to its MCAS Iwakuni, Japan home July 17, from more than five years of combat service in Vietnam.

An advance party of 26 Marines from Marine Composite Reconnaissance Squadron 1 arrived here July 15 aboard a KC-130F transport aircraft to make arrangements for the remainder of the squadron's move from Danang.

Two days later, the squadron's first aircraft arrived - an RF-4B Phantom II, piloted by Lt. Col. Paul A. Manning, the squadron commanding officer. Five other RF-4Bs arrived next, followed later by six of VMCJ-1's EA-6A Intruders.

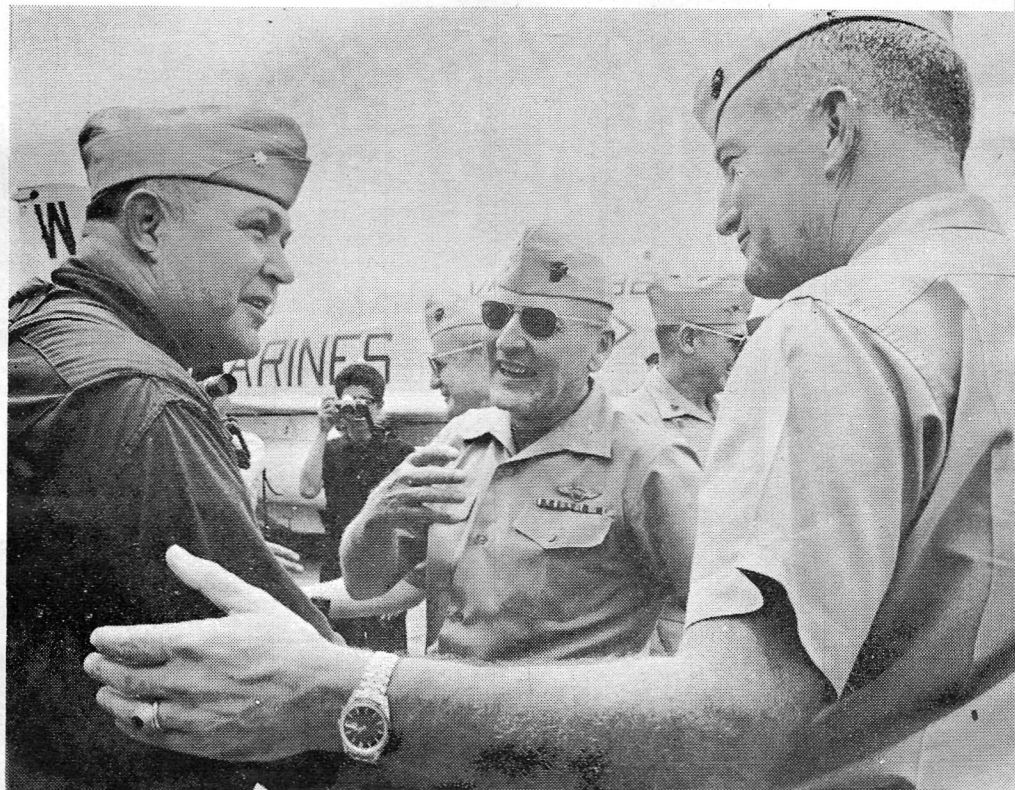
The composite reconnaissance squadron's redeployment from 1st MAW (Forward) in Vietnam to 1st MAW (Rear) at Iwakuni is part of President Nixon's announced reduction of U. S. troop strength in the Republic of Vietnam.

Japanese soil is not alien to VMCJ-1. In 1959, one year after the squadron was formed, it moved to Iwakuni from the Marine Corps' El Toro, Calif. air station.

Elements of VMCJ-1 were attached to carriers in the Gulf of Tonkin in 1964, and provided photoreconnaissance support for the U. S. fleet deployed there.

In April 1965 a detachment from the squadron arrived in Danang from Iwakuni. Within six hours of the detachment's arrival in Danang, the first photoreconnaissance mission was flown by a VMCJ-1 crew. Nine RF-4Bs and six EA-6As joined the squadron in Danang in October 1966.

(Continued on Page 6.)





Their faces betraying their delight at being "home," Lt. Col. Manning, the squadron "skipper" (left) and Capt. T. L. Miner, his radar systems officer for the Danang to Iwakuni flight, pose before the colonel's sleek Phantom.

VMCJ-1 COMES HOME

(continued)

Flying the RF-8A Crusader and the EF-10B Skyknight as well as its modified Phantoms and Intruders, VMCJ-1 became the first tactical squadron in Marine Corps history to operate four different types of aircraft simultaneously under combat conditions. The RF-8A and EF-10B were later phased out of service.

During the squadron's tour in Vietnam it compiled an impressive record. They flew 25,039 combat sorties. They recently set a squadron record with 10,000 accident-free flight hours. Another record was surpassed when VMCJ-1 compiled a total of 638 targets photographed in 425 combat missions during one month.

Flying more than 24,000 photoreconnaissance missions, squadron personnel developed more than 13 million feet (over 2,462 miles) of film. During operations in Vietnam, VMCJ-1 flew support for virtually all air and ground units in the I Corps tactical area, as well as reconnaissance flights over North Vietnam.

VMCJ-1 has been awarded one Presidential Unit Citation, three Navy Unit Commendations and the Commandant's Aviation Efficiency Trophy for 1967.

The role of VMCJ-1 is to provide multi-sensor imagery reconnaissance and electronic countermeasures in support of the Fleet Marine Force. The photoreconnaissance functions are fulfilled by the RF-4B. The EA-6A contains electronic countermeasures which can jam enemy radar devices, denying them the ability to track allied air missions.

Following VMCJ-1's return to Japan, Lt. Col. Manning commented, "It's good to be home. This is the squadron's home and my fourth tour here. So when I say 'It's good to be home,' I sincerely mean it."

The most sophisticated aircraft in the Marine aviation inventory is probably also the ugliest - the EA-6A Intruder. The North Vietnamese and Viet Cong learned the hard way that ugliness is only skin deep.

The mechanics and technicians standing by to meet the arrival of the first VMCJ-1 "birds" to return to Japan are shown leaving a KC-130F Hercules here two days prior to the coming of the bulk of the squadron aircraft.

