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Marine Corps Attack Squadron Taps Aviation Veteran Bassett to Provide Flight Ops Internal Communications Training



Yuma, AZ -- Marine Attack Squadron 211, known as the Wake Island Avengers, returned in March 2007 from duty in Iraq where it flew more than 2,700 Harrier missions over 206 days of sustained combat operations in the Al Anbar Province in support of Marine Expeditionary ground forces. Before being redeployed back to Iraq on its next combat mission, Commanding Officer Lt. Col. Eric Austin sought to enhance the internal communications capabilities of the squadron. "The preponderance of the missteps and discourse within a squadron directly involve poor communications or outright miscommunications, particularly between the operations and maintenance departments, both in the planning and execution of flight schedules," commented Austin. "This training was solicited to highlight this along with solutions at the institutional and interpersonal levels of communication," he added.

Following a national search, Lt. Col. Austin and his senior advisory team selected aviation veteran Steve Bassett and The Communications Workshop, LLC to provide this critical training. The company provides communications and disaster response training and consultation as well as public and media relations services to civilian and military flight operations. "Steve provided a very comprehensive and compelling discussion about communications in an organization and the impact on safety, leadership, and the overall culture," said Lt. Col. Austin.

Steve Bassett, chairman and CEO of The Communications Workshop presented Flight Ops: Improving Internal Communications to VMA 211 at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) Yuma, AZ. This unique training program covers topics including the relationship between effective communications, flight safety, and mission integrity, understanding the information supply chain, the key components of communications, old school vs. new school communications, outcome-based communications, effective listening, communications maintenance, and more. "Steve's emphasis on the communications 'supply chain' was a new paradigm that was well received," said Lt. Col. Austin



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“VMA 211 is an impressive squadron of Marine aviators,” commented Bassett. “They were actively engaged in the discussion and eager to find new ways to improve their internal communications processes. Their success on the battlefield depends on their ability to effectively communicate in a variety of scenarios and is critically important because it is directly relative to aviation safety and mission integrity. I could not have asked for a more dedicated and professional group of participants,” Bassett added.

More than 45 officers and senior NCOs including combat Harrier pilots and maintenance specialists participated in the training class which provided detailed guidance on how each member of a flight operation can improve their inter-personal as well as their management and organizational communications skills and techniques. The squadron’s Aviation Safety Officer, Captain Eric Grunke, observed that, “The concept of communication is not new to anyone in the room, however it is often taken for granted. Mr. Bassett’s presentation shed new light on an old topic in a new and refreshing approach.”

An instrument-rated pilot, NTSB-trained aviation accident investigator, and former television and radio sports broadcaster, Bassett said that most if not all aviation accidents can be traced back to a message malfunction somewhere along the information supply chain. “Poor communications leads to a degraded organizational safety culture which leads to a less safe environment and a higher risk of accidents. This was the fundamental message we delivered to Marine Attack Squadron 211,” he added.

Gunnery Sergeant Dupuis noted that, “This is the type of ‘outside the box’ training we do not get in the Corps”, and added that, “it was a very effective class and it was an outstanding period of instruction because Steve’s knowledge of the subject was outstanding”.

For more information, contact The Communications Workshop, LLC at 301-483-0158 or visit their web site at www.thecommunicationsworkshop.com. You also can contact Steve Bassett at srbassett@thecommunicationsworkshop.com.

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