



ANNUAL VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION CEREMONY



APRIL 25, 2025

COMMANDING OFFICER OF MCAS IWAKUNI

COL RICHARD M. RUSNOK

Col Richard M. Rusnok, a native of Pittston, PA, graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in May 1998 and was commissioned a Second Lieutenant in the U.S. Marine Corps.

Following pilot training, he received his Naval Aviator wings in June 2001 and has since served in a wide variety of operational, flight test, and staff billets throughout his career. In June 2022, he assumed command of MCAS Iwakuni, Japan.

Col Rusnok's operational tours include service with Marine Attack Squadron 223 (VMA-223) "Bulldogs" at MCAS Cherry Point where he deployed twice to Iraq for Operations SOUTHERN WATCH (OSW) and IRAQI FREEDOM (OIF). From March 2017 until April 2019, he served as the Commanding Officer of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 121 (VMFA-121) "Green Knights" at MCAS Iwakuni, Japan.

During that tour, Col Rusnok led the squadron in exercises throughout the Indo-Pacific region including the first F-35B operational at-sea deployment with the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) aboard USS Wasp. While under his command, VMFA-121 was named the winner of the 2018 Marine Corps Aviation Association's Commandant's Aviation Trophy as the best squadron in Marine Aviation.

Col Rusnok's flight test tours include functioning as the Operational Test Liaison Pilot embedded with both Air Test and Evaluation Squadron 23 (VX-23) at NAS Patuxent River (2010-2012) and with the U.S. Air Force's 461st Flight Test Squadron (461 FLTS) at Edwards, AFB (2013-2016) conducting both flight sciences and mission systems testing on all three variants of the F-35. He also served as the Marine Operational Test & Evaluation Squadron 22 / 1 (VMX-22 / VMX-1) Detachment Officer-in-Charge at Edwards AFB; project officer for F-35B Initial Ship Trials aboard USS Wasp; and as a flight demonstration pilot for the 2016 Royal International Air Tattoo / Farnborough International Airshows.

Col Rusnok's staff tours include service at Marine Aviation Weapons and Tactics Squadron 1 (MAWTS-1) as an AV-8B Harrier II Instructor Pilot and Fixed Wing Offensive Air Support Specialist in the Aviation Development, Tactics, & Evaluation Department (2006-2008) and at the U.S. European Command Directorate of Exercises and Assessments in Stuttgart, Germany (2020-2022) – first as the Joint Wargaming and Readiness Division Chief and then as the Joint Training and Exercises Division Chief.

He holds a Bachelor's of Science degree in History from the U.S. Naval Academy (with Honors); a Master's of Arts degree in History from The George Washington University; a Master's of Arts degree in National Security & Strategic Studies (with Distinction) from the U.S. Naval War College; and a Master's of Science degree in Systems Engineering from the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School. Col Rusnok is also a graduate of the Aviation Safety Officer (ASO) Course, the Weapons and Tactics Instructor (WTI) Course, and the U.S. Naval Test Pilot School's (USNTPS) Engineering Test Pilot Course.

Col Rusnok's personal decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal with Gold Star, the Air Medal with six Strike / Flight Awards, the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal with two Gold Stars, the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal with Combat Distinguishing Device and Gold Star, and six Sea Service Deployment ribbons.

Additionally, he is the recipient of the 2005 Commanding General II Marine Expeditionary Force Leadership Award; the USNTPS Sydney Sherby Leadership Award; the Marine Corps Aviation Association's John Glenn Squadron 2011 Marine Corps Test Pilot of the Year; the 2011 National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA) Marine Corps Military Tester of the Year; and the 2020 U.S. Naval War College's Mr. B. Franklin Reinauer II Defense Economics Prize.

Col Rusnok has accumulated over 2,800 mishap-free flight hours in over 20 different military aircraft including the AV-8B, F/A-18A-F, F-16, Mirage 2000D, and the F-35A/B/C.





SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- 1 – 1:30 PM Doors Open & Seating**
- 1:30 – 1:35 PM Program Commencement**
- 1:35 – 1:45 PM Opening Remarks by Installation Representatives**
Col Rusnok's Address | SgtMaj Armentrout Remarks
- 1:45 – 1:50 PM Presentation of Certificate of Volunteer Hours Donated**
- 1:50 – 2:10 PM Recognition of Top Volunteers**
- 2:10 – 2:30 PM President's Volunteer Service Awards (PVSA) presentation**
- 2:30 – 2:35 PM Closing Remarks**
- 2:35 – 3 PM Photos and Refreshments**

We salute the volunteers of Marine Corps Air Station Iwakuni for your selfless dedication and service to our community. Your work has made a difference in countless lives.

For all you do, Thank you!

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