

Thanks to Greg Davis for all the references on this scheme.



FS33613
Testors MM 1709
Humbrol HU145
Gunze Sangyo H318
Xtracrylcs NA



FS37018
Testors MM 1749
Humbrol HU33
Gunze Sangyo H12
Xtracrylcs XA1012



FS36375
Testors MM 1726
Humbrol HU127
Gunze Sangyo H306
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FS36326
Testors MM 1741
Humbrol HU128
Gunze Sangyo H307
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MARINE CORPS AIR STATION BEAUFORT, S.C. (AUG. 2, 2007) – A long, illustrious one for one of the most decorated fighter units in the Marine Corps officially came to an end here Aug. 1. The Moonlighters of Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort 332 called their colors March 31 in a formal Transferral Code Status Ceremony and for the last time.

It was a somber day on the flightline here, but during the ceremony it was duly understood this squadron is going out in style. The Moonlighters were not only awarded the 2006 Marine Corps Aviation Association Fighter Attack Squadron of the Year but they currently hold the longest streak of consecutive flight line awards for a tactical jet squadron with a respectable 150 consecutive.

"The Aviation Combat Element at our Marine Air Ground Task Force became a little bit smaller today. It was the right decision and one that we thought long and hard about and it still stands up to a challenge," said Col. Dave Reynolds, the commanding officer of Marine Aircraft Group 33. "We're standing down and moving into code status a superb squadron."

The Moonlighters officially transferred their colors about five Saturday, leaving MAG-31 with six fighter squadrons remaining. The squadron organized a full schedule of farewell events including a farewell 3.32 mile run, the Moonlighters' last Hornet flight, the formal Transferral ceremony, a golf tournament and a formal dinner.

"This was kind of an farewell for me because I loved being in the squadron stand down, but at least in a few years the Moonlighters will be brought back to life when they transfer to the new Joint Strike Fighter," said the new wing commander, Col. Mark Conrath, the Moonlighters' commanding officer from 1993-1995.

The "code" the squadron means that VOP # 1001.00 will be disbanded and the Corps will redistribute the additional personnel assigned to the squadron, but the Moonlighters' colors will be maintained in order to reactivate the unit upon the arrival of the replacement aircraft to the F-16, the F-35, coming to Joint Strike Fighter. "The code isn't a badge or means nearly the same, except there is not normally an intent to reactivate the unit and reactivate the colors," said the new wing commander, Col. David Wilbur, the former Moonlighters' CO who also commanded the squadron when they broke the 100,000 flight line flight hours record. "It will be an interesting thing, but the Corps will make the squadron's best flight before they are decommissioned."

"Being the CO of the Moonlighters while we were in Iraq in 2003 was the last professional event of my career," said the new wing commander, Col. David Wilbur, the former Moonlighters' CO who also commanded the squadron when they broke the 100,000 flight line flight hours record. "It will be an interesting thing, but the Corps will make the squadron's best flight before they are decommissioned."

The Moonlighters were selected to code last year as part of the Marine All-Phase Plan, designed to address Corps-wide aircraft transition, operational loading, readiness, and inventory shortfalls, manpower challenges, safety and fiscal requirements and to provide Marine All-Phase for the next 10 years and beyond. During this challenging transition period, the Corps will give the 13 to 16 to 17 Top Model Series aircraft before all transitions are complete.

Two Marine Hornet squadrons have been selected to code in 2007 to help address the service life limits of the F-16. In order to replace the current inventories of the Hornet, the new Hornet will be a VOP # 1001.00 series. "I'm a Marine Corps pilot."

The past year working with the Marine All-Phase Plan was the last year of my career," said Lt. Col. Samuel Kirby, the last Moonlighters' commanding officer of the Hornet, who is "standing down this responsibility with a heavy heart, yet it is also an honor because it will be the first squadron to be decommissioned the way for the new Joint Strike Fighter."

Story by Lance Cpl. Dave W. Hoot



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