

VMM-264 Reactivates Following Five-Year Hiatus



11 Dec 2025 | Capt. Jacob Ballard 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION CHERRY POINT, N.C. – Marine Medium Tiltrotor Squadron (VMM) 264, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW), was reactivated during a ceremony at Marine Corps Air Station New River, North Carolina, on Thursday.

VMM-264, known as “The Black Knights,” was deactivated on June 24, 2020, under Force Design initiatives. Throughout the squadron’s deactivation, the Marine Corps conducted an analysis of force management to ensure no operational commitments were unmet. This analysis identified the need for an additional VMM squadron on the east coast to provide sustained operational support to II Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF). This change within 2nd MAW reflects incremental adjustments to Force Design to meet the operational demands of

the service.

During the reactivation ceremony, Col. Daniel Kaiser, commanding officer of Marine Aircraft Group 26 (MAG), spoke about the squadron's history and its role in the MV-22's early operational employment.

"VMM-264 carries a distinguished legacy, having been established in 1959 and providing decades of critical support to Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) operations around the globe. Upon transitioning to the MV-22 Osprey in 2009, the squadron played a pivotal role in developing and advancing the MV-22 as the Marine Corps' premier assault support platform."

Kaiser went on to express excitement about the squadron's return. "MAG-26 is proud to welcome this storied unit back into the fold and looks forward to the significant contributions the 'Black Knights' will bring in support of the 'Carolina MAGTF.'"

The squadron will resume operating the MV-22 Osprey tiltrotor aircraft. The MV-22 Osprey is a multi-role tiltrotor aircraft developed by Bell Helicopter and Boeing, designed to support Marine Corps operations with enhanced versatility and speed. First introduced in the late 1990s, the MV-22 combines the vertical takeoff capability of a helicopter with the speed and range of a fixed-wing airplane. It is equipped to perform a wide array of missions, including troop transport, logistics support, and casualty evacuation. Due to its speed and range, the Osprey significantly reduces transit time in operational environments, making it a crucial asset for rapid deployment and maneuverability in the field.

In addition to the reactivation, the ceremony also served as an assumption of command, during which Lt. Col. Paul Lancaster formally assumed responsibility, authority, and accountability for VMM-264 as the commanding officer.

Lancaster expressed his pride in leading the reactivation. "I'm proud to lead the reactivation of a legacy assault support unit. This reactivation brings the necessary balance and capacity to the MV-22 community and supports the continued evolution of Marine Corps aviation." He also recognized the efforts of those who made the reactivation possible: "Today's ceremony honors the Marines and Sailors who worked tirelessly to build a world-class squadron, dedicated to operational excellence. It also honors the thousands of Marines and Sailors who wore the Black Knight patch previously."

VMM-264 is a subordinate unit of 2nd MAW, the aviation combat element of II MEF.