



Brigadier General Sean M. Salene

**Director – Strategy and Plans Division
Plans, Policies & Operations, Headquarters Marine Corps**

On 1 October 2021, Brigadier General Salene assumed duties as the Director – Strategy and Plans Division, Plans, Policies & Operations, Headquarters Marine Corps.

BGen Salene began active duty in 1991 and graduated flight school on the Commodore's List with Distinction in 1994. He joined HMH-461 at Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) New River and deployed twice with Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs), supporting operations in the Balkans and Africa. In 1998, he attended the Naval Postgraduate School as the Marine Corps' first study track sub-Saharan Africa Regional Affairs Officer. He planned and conducted African Theater Security Cooperation (TSC) activities for Marine Forces Europe beginning in 2000 and worked with interagency, Navy and African partners on a new, cross-sector approach.



He returned to HMH-461 in 2002 and deployed twice for Operation ENDURING FREEDOM (OEF) Horn of Africa. In 2005, he attended Command and Staff College, graduating with honors. He attended the School of Advanced Warfighting and became a speechwriter for the Commandant of the Marine Corps. In 2008, he deployed for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM and led a cross-functional planning team for the Commanding General, Multi-National Force Iraq. In Baghdad, he became a lay minister for an Anglican priest who also led an Iraqi congregation.

In 2009, he had the honor to rejoin HMH-461 as its Commanding Officer. He led his team on three deployments: to Ghana for Presidential support; to the Caribbean as the commander of a Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF), with an infantry company and enablers attached to support TSC and interagency counter illicit trafficking operations; and, with 96-hours' notice, to Haiti as the 22d MEU Aviation Combat Element for Operation UNIFIED RESPONSE in 2010. After relinquishing command, he deployed with II Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF) FWD to Afghanistan for Operation ENDURING FREEDOM. He was the lead architect for the Regional Combined Team Plan, the first long-range plan signed by U.S., British and Afghan civil and military leaders in Helmand and Nimroz provinces.

BGen Salene attended the Marine Corps War College, graduating with honors in 2012. He presented his thesis work in Beijing and was selected to support a Commandant of the Marine Corps initiative on amphibious messaging. He later joined USCENTCOM and led a team to propose and develop, with Joint, interagency and international partners, Operation FREEDOM's SENTINEL the post-2014 mission in Afghanistan. He traveled to Washington, Kabul, Brussels, Mons, Berlin, London and Moscow, resulting in Secretary of Defense approval of the plan.

He returned to MCAS New River to command MAG-29 in 2015. His team supported the 2d Marine Expeditionary Brigade in 29 Palms, flew north of the Arctic Circle in Norway in COLD RESPONSE 2016 and led the command element for Marine Week Nashville. He left MAG-29 early to take command of the Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force Crisis Response Africa 17.2 in 2017 and deploy on short notice. Based in Spain and Italy, his team conducted activities in North, West and Central Africa, supported a CDRUSAFRICOM engagement in Tripoli, and instituted a new model to sustain MV-22 readiness and build capacity with NATO partners. Following deployment, he became the II MEF G-3 where he helped the MEF re-orient from being a force provider to a warfighter.

In 2018, BGen Salene was nominated to his current rank. He served as the Assistant Wing Commander, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, in Okinawa. He led multi-national planning in COBRA GOLD 19, supported exercises in the Pacific, built relations with Japanese hosts and advocated for aviation readiness initiatives. He also led a cross-functional team to implement the “Total Fitness” concept to implement the Commanding General’s comprehensive approach to reduce Suicide Related Events in 1st MAW by improving mental/physical/spiritual health and save lives.

In 2019, BGen Salene served as the Director of Communication for Headquarters, Marine Corps. He supported the Commandant in communicating Service priorities and Force Design, sought closer alignment in Naval messaging, engaged in public events with entertainment and media personalities, and supported the integration of information-related activities to better compete in the modern information environment. He also supported the continued evolution and integration of the Communications Strategy and Operations community, Field Music and the President’s Own, and advocated for transparent Service communication on difficult topics.

In 2020, he was selected as the Military Advisor to Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, the United States Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation (SRAR). He assisted SRAR to continue the peace process with the Islamic Republic and the Taliban and consult with allies and partners during the COVID-19 pandemic. Diplomacy led to the opening of the Afghanistan Peace Negotiations, supported military withdrawal and enables pursuit of a negotiated settlement to end more than 40 years of war.

BGen Salene holds five masters degrees. He is married to Dr. Kimberly Salene of Queensbury New York, a Navy veteran. His hobbies are reading, exercising and playing with his children.