"If you had a table full of Blue Angels, you would have a hard time telling who the boss is," said Lt. Mark Swinger, who holds the No. 4 pilot slot. "There are no one-way conversations. The door is always open. He listens to us."

Growing up in Atlanta, McWherter always knew that he wanted to be a naval aviator, and The Citadel was a calculated part of his plan to reach that goal.

Scott McMurray, who shared a room with McWherter as a junior, still maintains a close friendship with his former roommate. "His dreams were on the walls of his room at home—posters of F-14s and F/A-18s. Greg recent of only 33 commanding officers in the history of the Blue Angels.

As commander, McWherter is the flight leader of the six demonstration pilots and the three Marine pilots for the C-130 transport plane, nicknamed "Fat Albert," that carries the Blue Angels' gear from show to show. In addition to the pilots, the team includes an events coordinator, an administrative officer, a maintenance officer, a flight surgeon, a public affairs officer, a supply officer and a team of enlisted Navy and Marine Corps support and maintenance personnel.

"The Blue Angels team is more than just six pilots. We've got 130 sailors and Marines that make this organization run," said McWherter. "They fuel our jets, they fix our jets, they make sure our seats are safe and our canopies are clean. And the big name on this team is trust. Unlike anywhere else I have been in my life, I don't even preflight my jet. It is done for me. It is done for me, and I know they are doing it right."

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