



# Jet Stream

VOL. XXII, No. 31

Marine Corps Air Station, Beaufort, S.C. 29904

August 1, 1980

## "Thunderbolts" tangle with Navy T-38

By PFC Jeff Housdam

The aircraft is almost invisible against the blue-gray background as it zips towards the patrolling F-4. From the ground it looks almost like a showdown, like a fight to the finish with only one aircraft going home victorious.

The confrontation is not real, although both pilots know that at any time during their career it could be. The F-4 belongs to Marine Aircraft Group (MAG)-31's Marine Fighter Attack Squadron (VMFA)-251. The opponent is a Navy T-38 from Navy Fighter Squadron (VF)-43 stationed at Naval Air Station Oceana, Va. The Navy "bird" was here with VMFA-251 last week as part of a week-long training exercise called Dissimilar Air Combat Training (DACT). DACT is designed to give F-4 pilots practice at "dogfighting" (air-to-air combat) against smaller, more maneuverable aircraft. "The T-38 effectively simulates a communist block aircraft because of its size and maneuverability," says First Lieutenant Nick Episcopo, '251 Radar Intercept Officer (RIO).

The pilots maneuver their aircraft against each other on a one-to-one or two (F-4's)-to-one basis with the F-4 pilots preferring the two-to-one situation if at

all possible. The pilots use specified airspace over the ocean to do their high speed maneuvering.

The F-4 pilots did well against the T-38's according to Lt. Episcopo. "How well they do against the T-38's depends on how much experience the aircrew has had in DACT. This is a training situation and the pilots will sometimes try maneuvers that they wouldn't normally try in a combat situation. That's because there's no time in combat to try new maneuvers. If it doesn't work, the T-38 will be right on them. Also, they are a little un-familiar with the way a T-38 can maneuver."

Lt. Episcopo adds, "This exercise really tested the pilots' skill. It also gave the RIO's a chance to use their radar in a tactical situation to track an "enemy" aircraft. It's the RIO's job to track the T-38 before visual contact is made. Since the T-38 has no radar, the F-4 has the upper hand. For instance, if the T-38 is coming up from 20 miles out we can see him on our radar but he still doesn't know exactly where we are. This enables us to get ready for him."

No one knows when or if training will stop and live combat will begin. But thanks to DACT and the help of a T-38, aircrews of VMFA-251 will be ready.



Photo by Sgt. D. Norman

CLOSE THEM UP — Lieutenant Steve Drake, pilot from Navy Fighter Squadron-43 from Oceana, Va., receives a pre-flight check from Bob Phillips, air frame specialist from the Northrop corporation, the makers of the aircraft.

## Navy Relief: taking care of our own

By LCpl. Cara Eldridge

It is said "giving is better than receiving" and Air Station Marines have upheld that old saying, during the Navy Relief fund drive which ended yesterday.

Station and Marine Aircraft Group (MAG)-31 personnel reached 92.3 percent of the proposed \$10,297.80 goal as of the Jet Stream's press time. Final results will be published next week.

The goal was based on the amount of money Navy Relief had computed as their operating budget for next year. Squadron goals were based on the number of enlisted and officer personnel attached to each squadron. Officers were asked to contribute \$9 and enlisted personnel were asked to give \$2.40. Navy Relief figured that if each person

car wash which cost \$1.50 per car. The wash included an interior vacuuming and an exterior wash. Even though the fund drive is over personnel wishing to contribute money may still do so by dropping by the Navy Relief office near the Marine Corps Exchange area.

These are the final results of the fund drive as of press time. Detachment "Bravo" held the lead throughout the drive with 269 percent of its goal followed by Headquarters and Headquarters Squadron with 143 percent of its goal. Marine Air Base Squadron-32 has maintained its 103 percent while Marine Air Control Squadron-5 has just surpassed its 100 percent goal by 60 cents. "MAG-31 personnel had a goal of approximately \$6,000 to obtain," says Major Raymond Kotrla, Navy

## AVELEX puts tactical units on defensive

Tactical units aboard the Air Station will be on defense today during Aviation Element Exercise (AVELEX).

The simulated attack will be made by approximately 8 A-6 and A-4 aircraft belonging to Marine Aircraft Groups (MAG)-32 and 14 from Marine Corps Air Station, Cherry Point, N. C. The defense of the Air Station lies in the hands of four Beaufort squadrons. They are Marine Fighter Attack Squadrons — 122, 251 and 312; they will be directed by "the eyes of fighter town east," Marine Air Control Squadron (MACS)-5.

"This exercise will simulate the defense procedures used in case of an air strike against a friendly airfield," says First Lieutenant George VanDeusen, MAG-31 air space officer. "The F-4's will be positioned at certain strategic points around the runway. The pilots and radar intercept officers will be near the aircraft ready to go at the first alert. MAG-31 will also launch a Combat Air Patrol (CAP)." A CAP is a group of aircraft that circles