

# The

# Beaufort Gazette

*One rescued; one missing*

## Air station jet

## crashes in ocean



**MARINE CORPS F-4 PHANTOM SIMILAR TO ONE THAT CRASHED**  
... file photo of VMFA-251 squadron plane

A Marine Corps Air Station F-4J Phantom jet crashed about 53 miles out at sea, shortly after 10:13 a.m. today, Marine officials said.

Two crewmembers bailed out, according to reports. Lt. Jeffrey Hill, the navigator, was recovered by a U.S. Coast Guard helicopter from the search and rescue station at Hunter Army Air Field.

Hill was apparently unhurt, but was carried to the U.S. Naval Hospital for examination and x-rays. He was reported to be shaken up, but suffered no physical injury. His family had been notified.

The pilot's name was not released. Rescue teams were still searching for the

pilot at midday today.

Two Coast Guard H-52 helicopters, an air station H-46 copter and a sport fishing vessel were the first to the scene, officials said.

The "Manatee," a Hilton Head boat, heard distress radio reports and headed for the area, latitude 31.44 north and longitude 80.08 west.

The Phantom, attached to Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 251, was returning from a routine training mission at the time of the crash, Marine officials said. There were no reports explaining the crash.

Flight service weather reports out of Charleston indicated good visibility with

a broken cloud ceiling at about 25,000 feet. Possible showers were predicted with southwesterly winds at 14 to 16 knots.

Newsmen were not permitted to see Hill and were refused admittance to the air station public affairs office, on Col. Bruce Rutherford's order, according to a Marine spokesman.

Hill's age and hometown were not released.

The most recent crash of an air station jet was Nov. 25, 1978. A TA-4 Skyhawk crashed near Desert Center, Cal. on a routine training mission — the pilot, Capt. Terry Dugan, 27, Rochester N.Y., ejected safely.

# Missing pilot presumed dead

Marine officials have essentially given up their three-day search for the pilot of the F-4J Phantom jet which crashed 53 miles offshore Friday morning.

Capt. Steve J. Anderson is presumed drowned. Rescue efforts by air station helicopters, a C-130 transport and two U.S. Coast Guard helicopters were unsuccessful over the weekend.

The radar intercept officer, 1st Lt. Jeffrey Hill, was pulled from the ocean by a coast guard rescue helicopter shortly after the air-to-air fighter's crash, about 10 a.m. Friday. Hill, 30, was apparently shaken up, but not injured.

Col. Bruce Rutherford, commanding officer at the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station, said officials do not know whether Anderson and Hill ejected at the same time. The initial distress call reportedly came from a second jet flying alongside the Phantom, attached to Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 251.

Apparently both men were seen bailing out, according to reports.

Rutherford said a C-130 patrolled the wreck area for more than six hours Saturday. Helicopter rescue teams and a Coast Guard cutter had searched the site until dark Friday.

A fishing vessel from Hilton Head, the "Manatee" was in the area Friday morning and joined the search, officials said. Floating buoys were dropped at the site of the crash, to indicate the direction of surface currents, and followed during the search.

Scuba divers attempted to reach the wreckage Saturday, but were unable to locate the jet, Rutherford said.

"We know where it went down. It's at least



CAPT. STEVE J. ANDERSON

100 feet deep; it could be deeper," he said.

Strong underwater currents hampered divers' efforts, he said. As far as officials have been able to determine, the jet was essentially in one piece when it struck the water, according to Rutherford.

But he said it is not known whether there was an explosion before the Phantom crashed.

That investigation hinges upon studying the  
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## Crash

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wreckage. A request for permission to begin a salvage operation was under way this morning, Rutherford said.

The fighter was returning from a routine training mission at the time of the crash. The cause is unknown.

Anderson, 30, lived at 272 Birch Drive. He is survived by his wife, Linda, and four children, three boys and a baby girl.

Memorial services will be at 4 p.m. tomorrow at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, on secondary 280, near Shell Point.

Anderson was from Idaho. He was a ward mission leader at the church and had filled a two-year mission to New Zealand before

coming to Beaufort two and one half years ago, according to Bishop Nolan Woods.

"He was a very special fellow, a loveable person who got into the hearts of everyone. Everyone who knew him loved him. It's a great loss to all of us," Woods said.

Anderson was a graduate of Brigham Young University, in Utah.

Anderson was a 1967 graduate of Arco High School, in Arco, Idaho.

Anderson's father said today his son served five years in the Marine Corps. He had always wanted to be a pilot.

"He studied pre-dentistry in college, and gave it up at the last minute. He chose flying because he loved it so.