UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
MARINE FIGHTER ATTACK SQUADRON 251
MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP 31
2D MARINE AIRCRAFT WING, FMF, ATLANTIC
MCAS, BEAUFORT, SOUTH CAROLINA 29904-6127

5750
S-3
10 July 89

From: Commanding Officer, Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 251, Marine Aircraft Group 31, 2d Marine Aircraft Wing, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic, Marine Corps Air Station, Beaufort, South Carolina 29904
To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code HDH-4), Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C. 20380
Via: (1) Commanding Officer, Marine Aircraft Group 31 (S-3), 2d Marine Aircraft Wing, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic, Marine Corps Air Station, Beaufort, South Carolina 29904
(2) Commanding General, 2d Marine Aircraft Wing, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic, Marine Corps Air Station, Cherry Point, North Carolina 28533
(3) Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic, Norfolk, Virginia 23511

Subj: VMFA-251 COMMAND CHRONOLOGY FOR 11 JANUARY 1989 TO 30 JUNE 1989

Ref: (a) MCO P5750.1F
(b) WgO 5750.1E
(c) GruO 5750.1E

1. In accordance with references (a) through (c), the Command Chronology is submitted.

SECTION 1

Unit Designation

a. Reporting Unit Code: 01251

b. Table of Organization: 8851

Period Covered and Location

11 January 1989 - 30 June 1989 at MCAS Beaufort, South Carolina 29904

Personnel Information

| | |
|---|---|
| a. Commanding Officer | LtCol Richard W. WALKER<br>2 June 1989 - 30 June 1989 |
| | LtCol Robert A. MADDOCKS, Jr.<br>11 January - 2 June 1989 |
| b. Executive Officer | Maj Paul A. ANDRES<br>2 June 1989 - 30 June 1989 |
| | Maj Barney J. FISHER<br>11 January 1989 - 2 June 1989 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| c. | Administrative Officer | Capt William J. MILES<br>11 January 1989 - 31 January 1989 |
| | | WO Edward J. ROZAK<br>1 February - 3 March 1989 |
| | | Maj Paul A. ANDRES<br>4 March - 1 June 1989 |
| | | Capt Thomas G. BOODRY<br>2 June 1989 - 30 June 1989 |
| d. | Intelligence Officer | SSgt Randolph J. ABRAMS<br>11 January 1989 - 1 May 1989 |
| | | SSgt William E. CAUTHORN<br>2 May 1989 - 30 June 1989 |
| e. | Operations Officer | Maj Richard J. PACKARD<br>11 January 1989 - 30 June 1989 |
| f. | Logistics Officer | Capt Donald W. BUSSELL<br>11 January 1989 - 15 February 1989 |
| | | Capt Richard H. MORRILL<br>16 February 1989 - 30 June 1989 |
| g. | Aircraft Maintenance Officer | Maj Daniel A. DRISCOLL, Jr.<br>11 January 1989 - 28 March 1989 |
| | | Maj James H. WILSON<br>29 March 1989 - 30 June 1989 |
| h. | Safety Manager | Capt Thomas W. THOMAS<br>11 January 1989 - 7 June 1989 |
| | | Capt Michael T. CARIELLO<br>8 June 1989 - 30 June 1989 |
| i. | Staff Historian | Maj Richard J. PACKARD<br>11 January 1989 - 28 April 1989 |
| | | Capt Eric HEIDHAUSEN<br>29 April 1989 - 30 June 1989 |
| j. | Sergeant Major | SgtMaj Jerry W. MICHAEL<br>11 January 1989 - 30 June 1989 |

Average Monthly Strength

| | USMC Officer/Enlisted | USN Officer/Enlisted |
|---|---|---|
| January 1989 | 22 / 157 | 1 / 2 |
| February 1989 | 19 / 142 | 1 / 2 |
| March 1989 | 20 / 137 | 1 / 2 |
| April 1989 | 20 / 137 | 1 / 2 |
| May 1989 | 25 / 133 | 1 / 2 |
| June 1989 | 23 / 135 | 1 / 2 |

Equipment

| | Number | Type |
|---|---|---|
| January 1989 | 10 | F/A-18A |
| February 1989 | 10 | F/A-18A |
| March 1989 | 11 | F/A-18A |
| April 1989 | 11 | F/A-18A |
| May 1989 | 11 | F/A-18A |
| June 1989 | 11 | F/A-18A |

## SECTION 2

### Command, Operations, Training

On 10 January 1989 the squadron arrived at MCAS Beaufort, SC after a six month WESTPAC UDP Deployment. The inititial objectives upon return were to standup local flight operations out of MCAS Beaufort and begin a massive personnel turnover. Within five months 75% of the squadron's maintenance personnel and 85% of the squadron pilots had turned over.

During this turnover period several partial squadron deployments were conducted. From 13 February to 15 April 1989, one pilot, 3 aircraft, and 25 maintenance personnel supported WTI 2-89 at MCAS Yuma, AZ. From 17 March to 24 April, one pilot, 2 aircraft, and 17 maintenance personnel supported TOPGUN 3-89 at NAS Miramar, CA. Concurrent with the two training detachments we supported the 2nd MAW and 2nd MARDIV CASP program from 9-21 April 1989 with six Hornets flown out of Bogue EAF, NC.

Once these deployments ended the squadron began to send both officers and enlisted to over twenty formal training schools.

Between 4 and 21 May 1989 the squadron participated in MEF exercise Solid Shield-89 (which tookplace along the East Coast between Atlantic Field, NC and Parris Island, SC). The squadron supported the exercise from MCAS Beaufort and Bogue EAF. Solid Shield missions included air-to-air and air-to-ground missions in the 300 and 400 level T&R syllabus.

Following the Change of Command on 2 June 1989 the squadron deployed to Nellis AFB, NV (8-25 June) in support of the 422nd Test and Evaluation Squadron while simultaneously supporting TOPGUN 4-89 with one pilot, 2 aircraft, and 20 maintenance personnel at NAS Miramar, CA.. The Nellis deployment presented pilots with the most current weapons threat available in complicated, multi-plane, all aspect threat scenarios. All sorties were 400 level T&R syllabus instrumented on the Nellis RFMDS Range.

Subj: VMFA-251 COMMAND CHRONOLOGY FOR 11 JANUARY 1989 TO 30 JUNE 1989

During this period the squadron was nominated by MAG-31 and 2nd MAW for the Commandant's Aviation Efficiency Award. Additionally, the squadron flew over 26,000 mishap free hours.

## PERSONNEL AND ADMINSTRATION

Both officer and enlisted manning has been in a constant fluctuation as the Squadron strives to obtain their staffing goal.

## LEGAL ACTION

The Commanding Officer of the squadron is the Special Courts Martial Convening Authority. He directed the following legal proceedings during the period 11 January 1989 thru 30 June 1989.

| | |
|---|---|
| General Court Martials | 1 |
| Summary Court Martials | 0 |
| Special Court Martials | 0 |
| Non-Judicial Punishments | 3 |
| JAG Manual Investigations | 1 |

## MEDICAL

The Flight Surgeon completed all flight physiology training for squadron pilots.

## LOGISTICS/SUPPLY

None

## CIVIC ACTION

Throughout the last six months, the squadron conducted static displays for numerous airshows across the country. Additionally, local static displays were conducted for various organizations.

Subj: VMFA-251 COMMAND CHRONOLOGY FOR 11 JANUARY 1989 TO 30 JUNE 1989

SECTION 3

| | |
|---|---|
| January 1989 | VMFA-251 flew 145 sorties/168.5 flight hours |
| 10 January 1989 | Completed a six month UDP deployment with a successful return to MCAS Beaufort |
| 11 January 1989 | Assumed the MPF VMFA-1 responsibility |
| 17 January 1989 | Squadron safety standdown |
| 25 January 1989 | 1st Marine Corps district tour, lecture and static display |
| February 1989 | VMFA-251 flew 300 sorties/355.5 flight hours |
| 2-4 February 1989 | MAG-31 AAWEX 1-89 at MCAS Beaufort |
| 9 February 1989 | Accepted 10 LOT IX F/A-18 from VFA-106 NAS Cecil Field, Florida |
| 13 February 1989 | A Squadron detachment participated in Weapons and Tactics Instruction School at MCAS Yuma, AZ (Ended 15 April 89) |
| 20-24 February 1989 | Air combat manuevering training against Navy Fighter Weapons School (TOPGUN) at MCAS Beaufort. |
| 28 February 1989 | Completed 25,000 mishap free flight hours |
| March 1989 | VMFA-251 flew 330 sorties/446.8 flight hours |
| 3-8 March 1989 | Two Hornets supported LZ Bluebird MAGTAF demonstration at Camp Lejuene, NC |
| 6-10 March 1989 | Participated In Joint Training Readiness Exercise (JTRE) at Fort Bragg |
| 17 March 1989 | A Squadron detachment went to Navy Fighter Weapons School (TOPGUN) at NAS Mirmar, CA (Ended 24 April) |
| 17-20 March 1989 | Participated in DACT missions in support of VMA-124 |
| 27 March 1989 | Completed a MALS-31 QA audit and 2nd MAW post deployment maintenance inspections. |
| April 1989 | VMFA-251 flew 234 sorties/293.2 flight hours |
| 2-21 April 1989 | The Squadron participated in CASP fire support exercise from EAF Bogue, NC in support of 2nd Marine Div units at Camp Lejuene, NC |

| | |
|---|---|
| 27 April 1989 | The Squadron completed the Commander Navy Air Atlantic (CNAL) Inspection. |
| May 1989 | VMFA-251 flew 376 sorties/440.0 flight hours |
| 1 May 1989 | The Squadron began a comprehensive new pilot work-up syllabus. |
| 6 May 1989 | Participated in exercise Solid Shield 89 from both MCAS Beaufort and EAF Bogue Field (Ended 20 May) |
| June 1989 | VMFA-251 flew 201 sorties/277.2 flight hours |
| 2 June 1989 | The Squadron's change of Commanding Officers occured. |
| 5 June 1989 | A partial Squadron deployment to NAS Miramar's Navy Fighter Weapons School began. |
| 6-11 June 1989 | Four pilots went to NAS Fallon for the short version of the Navy SLATS course. |
| 9 June 1989 | The Squadron deployed to Nellis AFB for Air-to-Air and Air-to-Ground training (Ended 24 June 1989). |

Subj: VMFA-251 COMMAND CHRONOLOGY FOR 11 JANUARY 1989 TO 30 JUNE 1989

SECTION 4

Item 1.....EXERCISE SOLID SHIELD AFTER ACTION REPORT

Item 2.....NELLIS AFB, DEPLOYMENT AFTER ACTION REPORT

Item 3.....COMMANDANT'S AVIATION EFFICIENCY TROPHY NOMINATION

R. W. WALKER

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
MARINE FIGHTER ATTACK SQUADRON 251
MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP 31
2D MARINE AIRCRAFT WING, FMF, ATLANTIC
MCAS, BEAUFORT, SOUTH CAROLINA 29904-6127

3120
S-3
1 Jun 89

From: Commanding Officer, Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 251
To: Commanding General, Second Marine Aircraft Wing (SC-301)
Via: Commanding Officer, Marine Aircraft Group 31 (S-3)

Subj: SOLID SHIELD 89 AFTER ACTION REPORT

Ref: (a) WgO 3502.1A
(b) GruO 3628.2
Encl: (1) Solid Shield CAS Matrix

1. In accordance with references (a) and (b), the following After Action Report is submitted.

PART I - COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

The exercise allowed the squadron to participate in a two phase, joint air operation. The first phase consisted of pre-D Day missions such as deep air support and local airfield defense. The second phase tested the Squadron's capability to operate from an expeditionary airfield supporting the AOA with close air support and airborne defense.

Both phases tested the Squadron's ability to plan and execute joint long range, multi-plane, multi-mission sorties. Even a simple evolution such as aerial refueling was tactically integrated with the Command and Control element and overall progression of the exercise. In phase one, the F/A-18 DAS missions involved strike A/C, HARM shooters and escort fighters. The successful execution of these complicated sorties demonstrated the tactical skill of our pilots and the superb flight capabilities of the Hornet. Phase two clearly displayed the aviation contribution to the combined arms support of the Ground Combat Element. Close air support proved to be a timely and devastating asset which contributed even more to the ground scheme of manuever.

Minor setbacks involving communications and mission coordination displayed the ongoing difficulties presented in a joint arena over an extended geographical area. Pilots were forced to deal with these "frictions of war" which are seldom present in day-to-day training. The Squadron it is prepared to deal with a real world equivalent of this exercise. The following parts of this report deal more specifically with the exercise.

PART II - DEPLOYMENT STATISTICAL DATA

a. Deployment Site: MCAS Beaufort, S.C. 5 May 89-13 May 89
EAF Bogue Field N.C. 14 May 89-20 May 89

b. Dates: 5 May 89 - 20 May 89

ENCLOSURE [1]

c. Number of Aircraft: Nine (9) F/A-18's

d. Number of Personnel: 16 Officers/16 SNCOs/59 Enlisted

e. Training Objectives: Deep Air Support, Escort, HARM, Aerial Refueling, Low Altitude Tactics, EAF Operations.

f. Flight Hours:

(1) Total: 336.7

(2) Day: 333.9

(3) Nite: 2.8

(4) Actual Inst: 18.8

(5) Ferry: 0.0

g. Sorties:

(1) Air-To-Ground: 92

(2) All Weather Intercepts: 5

(3) Air to Air: 135

(4) Refueling: 42

(5) Other/Ferry: 15

(6) CNX: Wx - 14
Maint - 5
Ops - 10
Other - 4

h. Ordnance

| | |
|---|---|
| MK-76 | 68 |
| HARM, Captive | 2 |
| Aim-9, Captive | 8 |
| Flir Pods | 2 |
| Laser Detector Tracers (Not Utilized) | 6 |
| Chaff | 259 |
| Flares | 11 |

PART III -PROBLEM AREAS/LESSONS LEARNED

a. Personnel: None.

b. Intelligence: None.

c. Operations:

(1) Item: Target Area Marking For CAS

Discussion: One of the most difficult aspects of close air support is target identification. Although some aspects of SIMCAS in the G-10 area trained pilots to deal with target reece, the over all training did not comply with established doctrine. Some type of mark is needed to execute and improve target area recognition.

Recommendation: FACs should use some type of mark whether it comes from laser designators or the FAC marking his own position. The lack of a mark in a familiar training area creates a enormous false lesson learned.

(2) Item: CAS Matrix

Discussion: With the large AOA and diverse target area the number of CAS CPs and IPs exceed the F/A-18's waypoint storage limit. Normal BT-9/BT-11 CPs and IPs were not included in the Pilc Controller Handbook. If all CAS points were plotted on one matrix a 39 by 27 grid would have to be used for each SIMCAS mission.

Recommendation. The Pilot controller Handbook could contain a CAS Matrix. If excessive points are required they should be delineated "for use with" a specific area in the AOA. This would provide a more concise planning evolution and subsequent mission execution. See enclosure ( ) for the Squadron's CAS Matrix

(3) Item: Mission Planning Intelligence Information

Discussion. Up-to-date target area photos were not available. The only available photos were range photos obtained by the Squadron during pre-exercise planning.

Recommendation. Recon photos from RF-4 assets would have contributed to all DAS and most CAS missions (especially in-view of no target marking capability for Sim CAS). Future CAS/DAS missions could be improved by using RPV assets in a real-time evolution.

(4) Item: Bogue Field Arresting Gear

Discussion. The requirement for all Hornet recoveries to end with an arrested landing at Bogue Field after D-Day presente a significant safety hazard. The M-21 gear at Bogue Field is installed 12 feet offset to the right for Runway 23 and 12 feet offse to the left for Runway 05. The offset M-21 gear caused excessive drift and nose/wing down attitudes once the aircraft was in the gear. This sometime violent recovery from a centerline (no drift) landing could result in a rollout drift placing the Hornet 1/4 wingspan from the runway's edge.

Recommendation. The temporary solution used by the Squadron was to land 12 feet left of the runway centerline on Runway 23 and 12 feet right of centerline on Runway 05. The current M-21 placement at Bogue Field requires further investigation in order to provide safe F/A-18 arrestments. At a minimum, pilots must be prebriefed about landing/arrestment problems at Bogue Field.

(5) Item: KY58 Codes and Authentication Cards

Discussion. KY58 codes included fills 1-6 which differentiated among USMC/USN, USA and USAF assests. This produced a cypher communications drill that complicated several missions. Concurrently, the use of authentication cards was expected on several missions even when working covered frequencies. Some agencies did not read the authentication card correctly causing mission delays.

Recommendation. Once daily tasking orders are written the spins could include which fills for the KY-58 should be used for various control agencies. The overall communications plan could also include that information. Authentication cards should not be required for cyphered frequencies. The pilot controller handbook should describe how to use the cards.

(6) Item Changing Call Signs and Frequencies.

Discussion. The ongoing coordination puzzle that dealt with which call signs and which frequencies were in use caused significant operational setbacks. Valuable mission planning time was spent searching for a communications plan. Once airborne, aircraft had to make repeated frequency changes only to find that some control agencies had to be left out of the tactical communications loop.

Recommendation. Call sign and frequencies should be on the same piece of paper and changes should be addressed by message. The spins should include the frequency and call sign day in use for that day's ATO.

(7) Item: Clearance to Fire BVR.

Discussion. On several escort missions clearance to fire from GCI was issued only to discover the shots fired were on friendly forces.

Recommendation. Clearance to fire BVR in a Joint Arena must be coordinated at very high levels and should be specifically addressed on the tasking order by BVR times, areas or altitudes for all strike or AAW missions. Reguardless, positive EID requiremnts could always constitute shoot ROE Criteria.

(8) Item: Employment VS. Tasking of Strip Alert Aircraft.

Discussion. Continuous and Multiple tasking for strip alert aircraft held on deck severely limits the repeated use of the aircraft throughout the day. A continuous alert status limits the the mumber of flight leads/wingmen available to fly scheduled sorties. It also begins to infringe on the pilot's crew day.

Recommendation. Strip alerts should be incremented to include normal turn-around times vice a continous commitment. This would allow for ongoing training during non-usage periods. A squadron with eight aircraft becomes asset limited if it maintains continuous alerts, consequently, it cannot fly those aircraft which then reduces the number of daily sorties.

(9) Item: Forward Air Conrollers Working CAS around the New River ATA.

Discussion. Several FAC'S requested CAS that was extremely close to the New River ATA. Although targets were generally outside the ATA, Run-In lines and egress turns placed Hornets inside the ATA's traffic pattern. Pilots even questioned the FAC/FAC(A)'s prior coordination with New River Tower. It seemed as though FAC(A)'s were coordinating with tower while ground FAC's only claimed prior coordination (it had not happened).

Recommendation. Either brief ground FAC's on how to operate around the ATA or restrict flights in that area unless controlled by FAC(A)'s

(10) Item: Orange Air Composition for AAW.

Discussion. The defense of Beaufort (ie, AAW) yielded the lowest training for individual aircrews because so little orange air exsited.

Recommendation. Retain a larger more dependable Orange Air Force and commit some Blue air as simulated aggressors whenever needed.

(11) Item: Non Exercise Sortie Allocation.

Discussion. Some strip alert sorties, as part of Anti-Air Warefare, were kept on CAP during their entire sortie (i.e. no orange air airborne).

Recommendation. It should be SOP that after 1/2 hour on CAP without orange air, airborne blue aircraft can run intercepts within their element.

(12) Item: Data Link.

Discussion. At the pilot in-brief for the exercise the use of Data Link was discussed. The squadron did not have any successful Links either in the Beaufort MOA or W-122.

Recommendation. Data link should be included in the pilot controller handbook. Frequencies and addresses for MACS-5, MACS-6, and any airborne assets for some missions should be part of a go/no go criteria.

D. Supply. None.

E. Embarkation. None.

F. Maintenance.

Item: Supply Packup.

Discussion. Some items the squadron requested in the pack-up were dropped by supply without notifying the squadron.

Recommendation. The squadron needs to see a final supply pack-up list, in order to cross check with our requirements. The list should include nomenclature and quantity.

G. Personnel

Item: Casualty Assistance Controls Reporting.

Discussion. During the exercise each unit should have to participate in some form of casualty reporting.

Recommendation. Implement the above discussion.

R. A. MADDOCKS, JR.

ENCLOSURE (1)

| IP \ CP | BENGL | BUCCANEER | BUICK | CARLA | CHRIS | COLT | COWBOY | DOLPHIN | FLYER | GIANT | ISLANDER | JOYCE | LISA | MARIE | NANCY | PENGUIN | RAIDER | RANGER | SEAHAWK | STEELER | ZELDA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BENGL | | 217° 23 | | 006° 68 | 355 59.5 | 133° 28 | 170° 21 | 241° 20 | | 157° 28 | 350° 85 | 315° 19 | 302° 107 | 004° 34 | | | 138° 32 | | 282° 21 | 256° 26.5 | 016° 58 |
| BUCCANEER | 037° 23 | | | 013° 88 | | 093° 24 | 048° 18 | 335° 9 | | 107° 26 | 360° 102 | 001° 31 | | 018° 54 | | | 099° 25.5 | | 349° 23 | 314 18 | |
| COLT | 313° 28 | 273° 24 | | | | | 267° 17 | 284° 38.5 | | 236° 11 | | 314° 47 | | | | | 165° 4.5 | | 300° 41 | | |
| COWBOY | 350 21 | 278 18 | | | | 087° 17 | | 297° 23 | | 124° 9 | | 334° 38 | | | | | 100° 18 | | 316° 35 | | |
| DOLPHIN | 061° 20 | 155° 9 | | 041° 86 | 099° 70.5 | 104° 38.5 | 117° 23 | | | 119° 32.5 | 001° 94 | 010° 23.5 | | 023° 48 | | | 109° 41 | | 348° 14.5 | 291° 9 | 027° 73.5 |
| GIANT | 337° 28 | 287° 26 | | | | 056° 11 | 304° 9 | 299° 32.5 | | | 328° 46 | | | | | | 079° 10.5 | | 313° 43 | | |
| RAIDER | 318° 32 | 279° 25.5 | | | | 345° 4.5 | 280° 18 | 289° 41 | | 259° 10.5 | | 317° 51 | | 038° 38 | | | | | 304° 50 | | |
| SEAHAWK | 102° 21 | 164° 23 | 035° 68 | 023° 69 | 015° 57 | 120 47 | 136° 35 | 168° 14.5 | 046° 82 | 133° 43 | 004° 79.5 | 037° 11.5 | | 035° 49 | | | | | | 026° 12 | 106° 12 |
| STEELER | 016° 26.5 | 134° 18 | 034° 79 | 023° 81 | 017° 69 | | | 111° 9 | 043° 93 | | 007° 91 | 031° 23.5 | | | | | | | 022° 43 | | |
| ZELDA | 196° 58 | | 035° 16 | 323° 15 | 280° 22 | | | 207° 73.5 | 077° 23.5 | | 312° 41.5 | 215° 51.5 | | 031° 32 | 329° 68 | 339° 85 | | | | | 265° 37 |
| RISELEY | | | 286° 30.5 | 279° 48 | 270° 59.5 | | | | 274° 18 | | 289° 73 | | | | 307° 90 | 318° 101 | | 018° 11 | | | 268° 35 |
| BEAR | | | 295° 28 | 284° 45 | 273° 56 | | | | 290° 13 | | 293° 71 | | | | 310° 90 | 320° 101 | | 025° 23 | | | 275° 29 |
| EAGLE | | | 308 25.5 | 290° 41 | 278° 51 | | | | 323° 10 | | 297° 67 | | | | 314° 89 | 324° 102 | | 035° 19 | | | 274° 33 |
| QUEEN | | | 307° 29.5 | 292° 45 | 279° 54.5 | | | | 316° 14 | | 297° 71.5 | | | | 315° 93 | 323° 104 | | 023° 19 | | | 268° 43 |
| SILLETTE | | | 289° 35.5 | 281° 52.5 | 272° 64 | | | | 280° 20 | | 290° 78 | | | | 306° 96 | 316° 106 | | 349° 12 | | | 287° 34 |
| SILVERDALE | | | 314° 33 | 298° 47 | 285° 55.5 | | | | 327° 18 | | 301° 74 | | | | 315° 96 | 324° 108 | | 018° 24 | | | |

ENCLOSURE 1

UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
MARINE FIGHTER ATTACK SQUADRON 251
MARINE AIRCRAFT GROUP 31
2D MARINE AIRCRAFT WING, FMF, ATLANTIC
MCAS, BEAUFORT, SOUTH CAROLINA 29904-6127

3120
S-3
7 July 89

From: Commanding Officer, Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 251
To: Commanding General, Second Marine Aircraft Wing (SC-301)
Via: Commanding Officer, Marine Aircraft Group 31 (S-3)

Subj: NELLIS AFB DEPLOYMENT 8 JUNE 1989 THRU 25 JUNE 1989 AFTER ACTION REPORT

Ref: (a) WgO 3502.1A
(b) GruO 3628.2

Encl: (1) Items submitted for Resolution by Higher Headquarters
(2) Items submitted for Information Only
(3) Kneeboard Card
(4) Classified tactical comments (PASSEP)

1. In accordance with references (a) and (b), the following After Action Report is submitted.

PART I - COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

The Squadron deployment to Nellis AFB yielded a significant increase in the aircrew's combat readiness percentage (CRP). The Squadron is still undergoing a massive pilot turnover and this deployment allowed for an intensive aircrew training evolution. The mission profiles concentrated on division air-to-air tactics with both internal and external strike support against the 422nd Test and Evaluation Squadron (F-15 Eagles). The squadron also practiced heavy ordnance delivery with MK-82 and MK-83 bombs and conducted deep air strikes with inert ordnance. Section lead and division lead workups were also conducted in concert with the daily schedule, plus the Trans Con to and from Beaufort and Nellis afforded new pilots the opportunity to receive familiarization with KC-10 refueling and ALTREV procedures.

The air-to-air portion of the exercise was carefully monitored via cassette tapes and ACMR use. Shot validation, ROE, and tactical constraints tasked pilots to resolve difficult and near impossible tactical procedures especially considering the Squadron's overall tactical experience. The 4 vs. unknown pre-sweep/escort of strike aircraft, required a complicated GCI/radar and communications plan to counter the Eagle's tactics. Specific tactical lessons learned are covered in enclosure (3) (Classified).

This deployment made the squadron significantly more combat qualified. It trained our pilots to fly in the most modern air-to-air arena expected and concurrently developed Squadron procedures for the administrative, maintenance and embarkation aspects of future deployments.

Subj: NELLIS AFB DEPLOYMENT 8 JUNE 1989 THRU 25 JUNE 1989 AFTER ACTION REPORT

PART II - DEPLOYMENT STATISTICAL DATA

a. Deployment Site: Nellis AFB, NV 8 June 89 - 25 June 89

b. Transcon Dates: 8 and 25 June 1989

c. Number of aircraft: Seven (7) F/A-18's

d. Number of personnel: 25 Officers/ 25 SNCO's/ 75 Enlisted

e. Training Objectives: Air-to-air Division and Section Tactics, air-to-ground DAS, air-to-ground live ordnance

f. Flight Hours:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (1) | Total: | 206.0 |
| (2) | Day: | 206.0 |
| (3) | Night: | 0.0 |
| (4) | TransCon: | 70.6 |
| (5) | Other: | 0.0 |

g. Sorties:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| (1) | Air-to-air: | 81 |
| (2) | Air-to-ground: | 26 |
| (3) | Low Level: | 0 |
| (4) | In Flight Refueling: | 11 |
| (5) | Cancellations: | 0 |
| | Weather: | 0 |
| | Maintenance: | 9 |
| | Operations: | 3 |
| | Other (Ferry Hops): | 5 |

h. Ordnance

| | |
|---|---|
| MK-82 - | 26 |
| MK-83 - | 10 |
| MK-76 - | 112 |
| BDU-48 - | 42 |
| AIM-7M CAPTIVE - | 2 |
| AIM-9M CAPTIVE - | 4 |
| FLIR PODS - | 1 |
| CHAFF - | 26 |
| FLARES - | 0 |
| ACMR PODS EXT/INT/ - | 6/4 |

i. Targets/ranged utilized - A/A - Caliente W
- Coyote N, S
A/G - R-74 A,B,C
- R-75 E,W
- R-64
- R-63

Subj: NELLIS AFB DEPLOYMENT 8 JUNE 1989 THRU 25 JUNE 1989 AFTER ACTION REPORT

R. W. WALKER

## ITEMS SUBMITTED FOR RESOLUTION BY HIGHER HEADQUARTERS

1. Personnel. None

2. Intelligence. None

3. Supply. None

4. Maintenance

Item: Fueling of aircraft.

Discussion: Fueling of aircraft is a time consuming evolution at Nellis AFB. If we bring fuel truck drivers of our own we can reduce aircraft turn around times.

Recommendation: Get drivers for R5/R9 refueling units and bring them on deployment to Nellis AFB. Trucks are available for check out to licensed drivers for the entire Det. Coordinate with deployment squadron liaison and POL supervision (Nellis 2-2308). In addition, ensure MALS-31, S-3 coordinates this at deployed sights.

5. Medical

Item: Credentials

Discussion: When deployed to Navy or Marine Corps facilities, flight surgeons are usually granted "Courtesy Privileges" by the local Military Treatment Facility (MTF) on receipt of a Naval message from MAG-31 attesting to the provider's qualifications. At Nellis AFB, however, the 554th Medical Group requires a complete copy of the deployed flight surgeon's credentials package before privileges are granted.

Recommendation: The squadron's flight surgeon bring a complete copy of his credentials package when deploying to Nellis AFB.

6. Embarkation/Logistics. None.

7. Safety. None.

8. Operations. (Unclassified Items Only).

a. Item: AIS (Airborne Inst. System) PODs and AISI (Internal) Pod use on the Red Flag measuring and debriefing system (RFMDS).

Discussion: The use of external AIS PODs presents negative lessons learned, unrealistic switchology, and invalid shot validation because the missile shot must be manually entered by the

console operator via a communication call from the pilot during the engagement. With thirteen aircraft on two seperate frequencies timely shot entries are impossible. All sorties took place on an RFMDS system.

Recommendation: The use of internal (AISI) PODs allowed for ideal tactical employment of aircraft on the RFMDS. Shots are entered in the system at trigger squeeze without any communications requirement. The internal PODs are a must for shot validation and kill removal criteria.

b. Item: ECM Equipment.

Discussion: The lack of ECM equipment drove the major portion of our tactical game plan. GCI employment became the replacement for good ECM gear. Pilots were forced to assume that hot aspect meant they had been targeted by the eagles. The low altitude war excluded most GCI calls and the combined lack of information resulted in numerous Eagle shot opportunities especially within 12nm. The aircraft that possessed ECM gear continually obtained the most accurate tactical picture. The proximity of the engagement to ground emitters also saturated pilot work loads. Discriminating the continuous ground threats from the air threats became difficult for even experienced pilots.

Recomendation: Ideal tactical training requires a full ECM compliment. The squadron cannot train as it would fight without ECM gear in all aircraft. New tactics and additional training requirements would precipitate as a result of an increased ECM allotment. Repeated ECM use may provide valuable information concerning pilot work loading and tactical considerations. For example, the Eagle pilots downed their aircraft if it did not contain working ECM gear but would fly with inoperable/weak radars.

c. Item: GCI Employment

Discussion: Two MACS-5 GCI controllers worked all of our missions. One controller manned a scope for each mission while the other briefed for the next sortie. Their contribution enforced real world difficulties in an all altitude war. Along with the tactical development, GCI/aircrew coordination took quantum leaps in painting a picture of the mission's progression. Unlike the Air Force's use of multiple controllers on each mission using Mode 3 squawks (with altitude) controllers were forced to play by the rules of using standard scopes in a two-dimensional arena.

Recommendation: Continue this program. The missions flown represented a realistic scenario and equipment mix. The squadron and controllers developed an exacting interchange of valuable information which lead to a noticable improvement in the development of a viable tactical game-plan.

Enclosure (1)

ITEM SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION ONLY

1. Personnel. None

2. Intelligence. None

3. Supply. None

4. Maintenance.

a. Item: Having a ground Maintenance Officer on the advance party greatly assisted in the smooth transition of maintenance operations upon squadron arrival.

Discussion: None

Recommendation: Continue this on future Deployments.

b. Item: There was a requirement for an electric Technical Representative to work on aircraft DW-06 (161961), (Fire warning and SMS degrade Sta 6).

Discussion: Technical Representatives provided great assistance to the squadron and are valuable in troubleshooting difficult discrepancies.

Recommendation: Provide Technical Representatives as requested by the squadron.

5. Medical.

a. Item: Medical and Dental Records

Discussion: Consultations in most medical, surgical, and dental specialties are available aboard Nellis AFB.

Recommendation: That the squadron medical department deploy with the appropiate medical and dental records, making sure that each member's medical and dental record is transported to Nellis AFB on an airplane other than the one on which the member is embarked.

b. Item: Mishap Kit

Discussion: While the Air Force stands ready to assist deployed units that suffer aircraft mishaps, Air Force procedures, forms, etc. differ from those of the Marine Corps. In addition, it is ultimately the responsibility of the unit experiencing the mishap to perform the investigation.

Recommendation: That the squadron flight surgeon bring a complete mishap kit when deploying to Nellis AFB.

6. Embarkation/Logistics. None

7. Safety. None

8. Operations. (Unclassified Items Only)

a. Item: Range Scheduling

Discussion: Air Force Publication AFR 50-46 details all air-to-air and air-to-ground weapons range use. Range scheduling, target selection and course rules information can be extracted from this publication. Allowing hosting commands to schedule the squadron's range requirements resulted in incomplete and inaccurate range coordination.

Recommendation: Do not let the hosting command schedule ranges for the squadron's use. Obtain a copy of range regulations and deal directly with Nellis Range Control.

b. Item: Nightly Debriefs

Discussion: The purpose of the air-to-air evaluation necessitated only limited intelligence of the Eagle's missile capability. Aircrew were not afforded any tactical employment considerations or weapons envelopes, consequently the squadron was forced to develop its own tactical decisions based on its own daily performance. Each evening all pilots discussed the days missions (successes and shortfalls). These meetings allowed for an exchange of tactics which proved extremely valuable and caused considerable employment problems for the F-15 Eagles.

Recommendation: The exchange of information is a must. Considering the experience level of the squadron overall a majority of switchology standards and tactical game plans were developed during during these meetings and became the backbone of success on follow on missions.

c. Item: Course Rules Brief

Discussion: The development and testing of various programs around the Nellis Operating Area presents flights with extremely restrictive and unforgiving course rules. The inbrief given by the 422nd Tactical Evaluation Squadron presented all the critical information and allowed for aircrew to ask specific administrative questions when using the operating area. A good waypoint systems and area sequence (Enclosure 4) also assisted in safe flight conduct.

Recommendation: Enclosure (4) was a logical breakdown of key navigational points allowing for expeditions Flight Ops in the Nellis operating area. The course rules brief is an Air Force requirement and the 422nd TES proved additional inflight-guides.

9. Coffee Mess:

Item: Coffee Mess T-Shirts

Discussion: Designed T-Shirts can be purchased at reasonable prices, excellent quality and fast work, at "Silver Cache LTD".

Recommendation: Save time shopping around, use them.

Enclosure (2)

## WYPTS LSV

UPDATE 9 JUN 8?

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0. LINE | N36-14-02<br>W115-02-30 | 1840'<br>E 14-12 | | |
| 1. MINT | N 36-42-25<br>W115-06-18 | M9. MCCARRAN<br>2174' | N 36-04-48<br>W115-09-06 | |
| 2. ATOLL | N 36-44-15<br>W114-55-00 | M8. INDIAN SPRGS<br>3123' | N 36-35-12<br>W114-40-18 | |
| 3. LEE | N 36-19-00<br>W1$5-33-00 | M7. TONOPAH TEST<br>550' | N 37-48-00<br>W116-47-00 | |
| 4. ROCK | N 36-34-00<br>W115-57-00 | M6. CHINA LAKE<br>2283' | N 35-41-18<br>W117-41-24 | |
| 5. STRIK | N 36-25-36<br>W115-30-42 | M5. GEORGE AFB<br>2875' | N 34-35-18<br>W117-23-00 | |
| 6. TULE | N 36-19-24<br>W115-14-12 | M4. EDWARDS AFB<br>2302' | N 34-54-18<br>W117-53-00 | |
| 7. APEX | N 36-21-18<br>W114-55-18 | M3. NAS FALLON<br>3934' | N 39-24-48<br>W118-41-36 | |
| 8. CRAIG | N 36-15-00<br>W115-10-00 | | 16. N 37-34-00<br>W115-00-00 | |
| 9. PLAZA | N 36-43-24<br>W114-53 | | 17. N 38-17-00<br>W115-00-00 | |
| 10. MAKZI | N 37-00-30<br>W116-20-42 | | 18. N 37-59-00<br>W115-00-00 | |
| 11. CEASAR | N 37-00-00<br>W116-29-00 | | 19. N 37-53-00<br>W116-26-00 | |

12. N 38-17-00
W115-00-00

13. N 38-14-00
W116-18-00

14. N 37-53-00
W116-26-00

15. N 37-33-00
W116-26-00

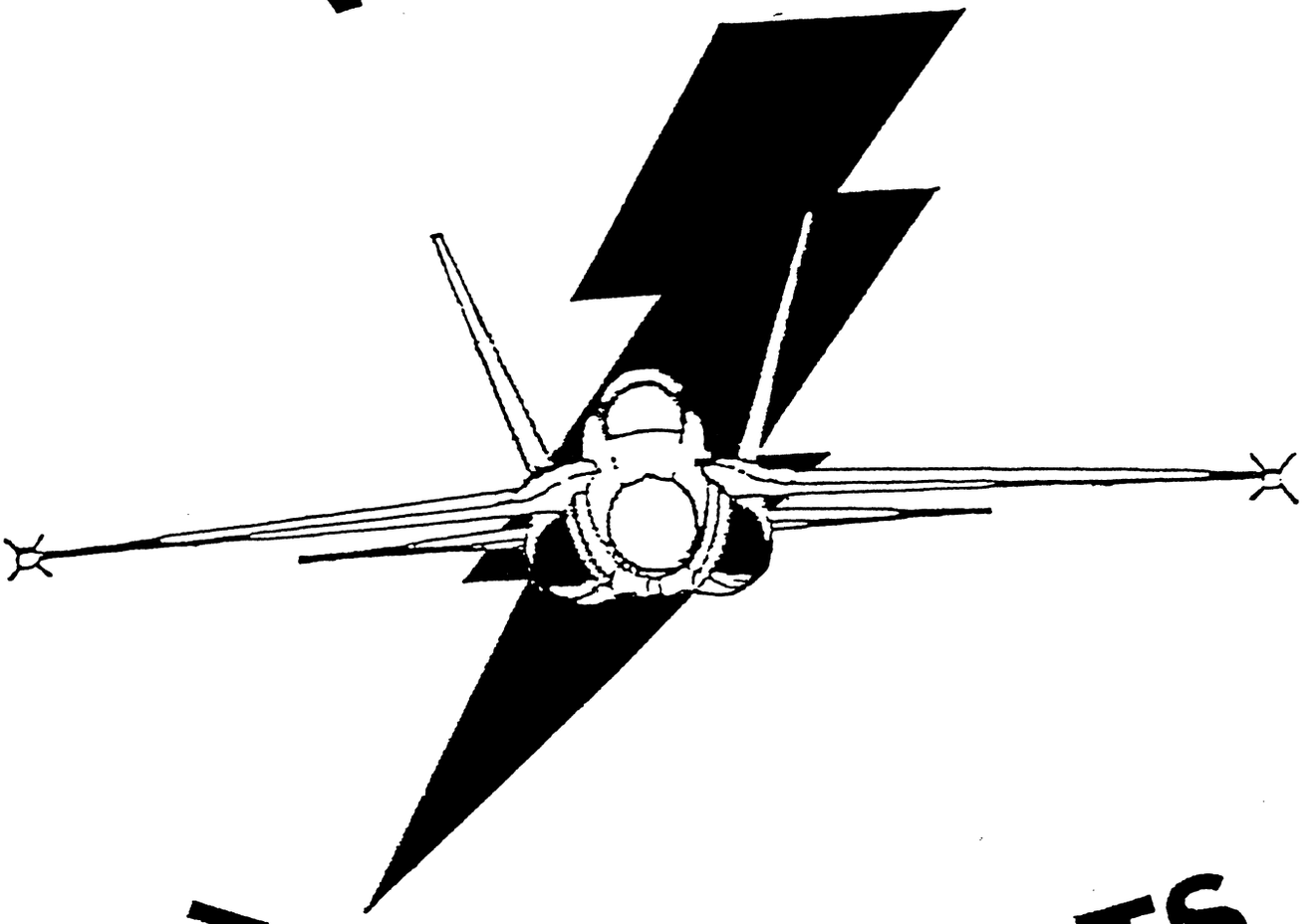
SEQ 1 (12 - 19)

MK 1-2 OPEN
WYOTS
12-19 SEQ 1

WYPTS
20-24 OPEN

Enclosure (3)

# VMFA-251



# THUNDERBOLTS

## 1989
## COMMANDANT'S
## AVIATION EFFICIENCY TROPHY
## NOMINATION

ENCLOSURE [1]

1650
S-1
1 Jun 89

From: Commanding Officer, Marine Aircraft Group 31
To: Commandant of the Marine Corps (Code ASM), Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C. 20380-0001
Via: (1) Commanding General, Second Marine Aircraft Wing, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic, MCAS Cherry Point, North Carolina 28533
(2) Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic, Norfolk, Virginia 23511

Subj: 1989 COMMANDANT'S AVIATION EFFICIENCY TROPHY

Ref: (1) MCO 1650.29C

Encl: (1) Narrative of Achievements
(2) Chronological List of Significant Events
(3) Statistical Summary
(4) Squadron History
(5) Proposed Citation

1. Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 251 is recommended with the utmost enthusiasm for the 1989 Commandant's Aviation Efficiency Trophy in accordance with the reference.

2. Since their stand-up in August 1986 as the third East Coast Hornet Squadron, the THUNDERBOLTS have distinguished themselves and excelled in every endeavor undertaken. From superlative performance at Fleet Fighter ACM Readiness Program (FFARP), unparalleled CAS support for 3rd Battalion/6th Marines at CAX 4-88, a flawless TransCON/PAC of 12 F/A-18 Hornets to WESTPAC, over 7 months of deployed time in WESTPAC/CONUS of which 4 months was duty in the field, 20 pilots certified as Air Combat Tactics (Instructors) by MAWTS-1, participation in the Close Air Support Program (CASP) with 2nd MARDIV at MCALF Bogue; the THUNDERBOLTS have clearly done it all and set the pace while doing it.

3. Producing these results under normal conditions would be impressive in itself, however, VMFA-251 succeeded despite major depot-level modifications of their older Lot VI F/A-18 aircraft requiring over 320 engine removals/reinstallations to incorporate these Technical Directives (TDCs). This staggering task was accomplished without mishap/injury while flying a full Flight Hour Program (FHP). The THUNDERBOLT Aviation and Ground Safety record is unequalled. They have embraced a commitment to excellence which is clearly seen in their all-hands approach to Safety; they have recently exceeded 26,000 mishap free flight hours in the F-4 and F/A-18 while receiving the 1987 CNO Aviation Safety Award and six straight FMFLant Aviation Safety Awards (1983-1988).

4. Through hard-work and determination, the THUNDERBOLTS quickly stepped to the forefront as the most outstanding squadron in MAG-31. Their "esprit de corps", attention to duty and professionalism are indicative of the aggressive approach to all they undertake and clearly marks them at the apex of Marine



ENCLOSURE (1)

Subj: 1989 COMMANDANT'S AVIATION EFFICIENCY TROPHY

Aviation. For the second year in a row, I enthusiastically recommend VMFA-251 for the 1989 Commandant's Aviation Efficiency Trophy.

G. R. VANGYSEL



ENCLOSURE (3)

NARRATIVE OF ACHIEVEMENTS

VMFA-251 UNIT DEPLOYMENT PROGRAM (UDP) PREPARATIONS. VMFA-251 began earnest preparations over 12 months prior to their July 1988 WESTPAC departure date. Highlights of this period included CAX 4-88, Fleet Fighter ACM Readiness Program (FFARP) and participation in the USAF 422nd Test and Evaluation (TES) Squadron's evaluation of Soviet 4th generation fighters versus the USAF F-15 and the USMC F/A-18.

CAX 4-88. The F/A-18 is eminently lethal in the Air-to-Ground regime, and an early goal for CAX 4-88 was to fully exploit the aircraft's sortie capability and weapons accuracy. Four months prior to CAX 4-88, the VMFA-251 THUNDERBOLTS initiated an indepth affiliation program with 3rd Battalion/6th Marines, the ACE staff and RLT-6 Headquarters. Pre-CAX training missions were coordinated and flown with 3/6 at Camp Lejeune while Squadron/Battalion planners began working the myriad of details associated with maneuver, fire support coordination and tactics for the first non-orchestrated, free-flow CAX. For the first time ever in a CAX, the GCE Commander assigned the ACE as the "main point of effort" during Phase II of day one of the war. This required excess sorties characterized by a maximum number of refuel and rearm turnaround evolutions. The T-BOLTS performed these in less than 45 minutes and sustained this rate for the entire CAX.

CAX 4-88 RESULTS. The CAX 4-88 results exemplified the highest levels of airmanship, maintenance support and tactical readiness. VMFA-251 flew an extraordinary 347 sorties/448.9 flight hours mishap free in less than 18 days with 100% sortie completion and ordnance drop rates. The average Circular Error Probable (CEP) was amazingly less than 25 feet. This performance in support of 3/6 earned numerous accolades including:

CG, 2nd Marine Division: "..your professional performance was noteworthy and did much to enhance the readiness of the Marine Corps."

CO, 6th Marines: "VMFA-251 had a significantly more demanding role in CAX 4-88 and they performed in an outstanding manner. Their professional skill was superior ...their commitment in support of the ground forces both in work and spirit was tremendous. They did it all and had fun doing it."

FFARP AND USAF 422nd TES AIR-TO-AIR TRAINING. FFARP is an AirLANT-chartered fighter squadron Air Combat Maneuvering (ACM) performance evaluation in a variety of multi-dimensional combat simulations administered by VF-43. All mission objectives and results are objectively measured and evaluated using the Tactical Aircrew Training System (TACTS) instrumented range facility located at the Virginia Capes operating area. The USAF's 422nd TES evaluation of

ENCLOSURE (1)



ENCLOSURE (3)

Soviet 4th generation fighter tactics was an equally demanding ACM evolution flown on the instrumented ranges at Nellis AFB. These missions included 2v2, 4v4 and 8v8 missions against F-15/F-16s simulating the Soviet 4th generation fighter threat.

AIR-TO-AIR TRAINING RESULTS. The THUNDERBOLTS flew an amazing 645/737.9 mishap free flight hours during these two pre-WESTPAC training evolutions. VMFA-251's spectacular AIM-7 kill ratio was the highest ever seen by VF-43 during FFARP; fully 50% higher than the fleet average. The CO, VF-43 adjudged the VMFA-251 FFARP as "the best Hornet FFARP to date...the THUNDERBOLTS demonstrated a mastery of the Hornet weapons systems never seen before by VF-43." The Nellis scenarios were equally successful against superior Soviet 4th generation fighter tactics simulated by F-15/F-16s. As a result, THUNDERBOLT pilots wrote two articles for the MAWTS-1 Newsletter and TOPGUN Journal covering lessons learned to assist new Hornet squadrons as they began their training standup. The T-BOLTS' outstanding successes during these evolutions were clearly a direct result of exceptional attention to detail, unlimited capacity for work and a total team commitment to the task at hand.

VMFA-251 TRANSCON/PAC TO WESTPAC. On 11 July 1988, VMFA-251 stood ready to deploy to MAG-15 in 1st MAW as part of the UDP program. Just five days later, the squadron arrived at Yechon Air Base, Republic of Korea completing a flawless TransCON/PAC that was executed without a single abort, delay or cancellation. 12 F/A-18s were flight ferried from MCAS Beaufort to Yechon Air Base, South Korea via MCAS El Toro, MCAS Kaneohe Bay and Wake Island; an awesome 8600 nautical mile trip in just 5 days. Upon arrival at Yechon all 12 Hornets were "up and ready" to carry out missions directed by CG, 1st MAW. This was a staggering evolution and required every T-BOLT Department countless hours of attention to detail ensuring that every phase of the operation went without hitch. Operations, Logistics and Maintenance performed brilliantly during the entire evolution; once again VMFA-251 and the F/A-18 proved an unbeatable team that could deploy halfway around the world in support of a MAGTF.

YECHON AIR BASE ROK, OPERATIONS. VMFA-251 settled into a very demanding routine living and working in the field as part of MAG-15 Forward operating at Yechon Air Base for the next three months. The T-BOLTS, very experienced with field duty at CAX, quickly maximized the myriad of training opportunities in the South Korean Peninsula. They established working relationships with Marines at Osan Air Base performing CAS, DAS and Beacon Bombing with 1st MAW and 3rd MARDIV Marines. Additionally, they developed a rapport with three USAF Tactical Fighter Squadrons, the 35th, 36th and 80th, that lasted throughout the deployment. Mutually beneficial training scenarios were flown against these squadrons including CAS, long range Strikes and Offensive/Defensive Counter Air. Inparticular,

the following highlights are noted of the three month THUNDERBOLT stay at Yechon Air Base:

*1st MAW "WINGEX" 17-28 August. Squadron detachment deployed to Kadena Air Base, Okinawa with 8 pilots, 30 maintenance Marines and 4 F/A-18s. Extensive Air-to-Ground and Air-to-Air missions were flown in support of the 3rd Marine Division and against the Japanese Self-Defense Force's (JASDF) 313 Air Division F-4s and USAF F-15s. This detachment proved invaluable for the THUNDERBOLTS; training was extremely high, a strong rapport was developed with the JASDF and the USAF, and this "mini-det" proved to be the prime mode of squadron training away from home base which proved very beneficial for the maintenance reliable F/A-18.

*432nd TACTICAL FIGHTER WING (TFW) F-16 OPERATIONAL READINESS INSPECTION (ORI) 26 August-15 September. Squadron detachment deployed to Misawa Air Base, Japan with 10 pilots, 45 maintenance Marines and 6 F/A-18s. Multi-mission scenarios flown against the USAF 432nd TFW during their ORI. These missions included long range Strikes, Self Escort missions and Defensive Counter-Air.

*MCAS IWAKUNI CORROSION DETACHMENT 15 August-10 October. Due to extensive runway repairs, MCAS Iwakuni remained closed for MAG-12/15 aircraft. However, VMFA-251 requested and received permission to use Iwakuni as an aircraft corrosion inspection and paint facility during this period. Without a fresh-water aircraft wash capability at Yechon, this proved very valuable. Squadron pilots were required to take-off/land on the MCAS Iwakuni 75-foot wide taxiway which proved no problem for the Hornet or THUNDERBOLT pilots.

*MULTI-SITE BASING OPERATIONS. Numerous times during their stay at Yechon Air Base, the THUNDERBOLTS found themselves operating from up to 4 different air bases. This was very challenging for the squadron especially the young pilots unfamiliar with the problems associated with flying in WESTPAC. Close supervision and detailed planning by Operations and Maintenance ensured that every move was thoroughly planned and flawlessly executed.

*1988 SEOUL SUMMER OLYMPICS. The THUNDERBOLTS remained in Yechon as the last squadron to close down the MAG-15 Forward camp in order to provide increased United States Military Presence in the South Korean Peninsula during the 1988 Seoul Summer Olympics. Although military forces were not needed to quell any violence, the T-BOLTS were ready.

*MAG-15 (FWD) YECHON CAMP CLOSE-DOWN. By 10 October, all THUNDERBOLTS had left Yechon after 13 weeks of monsoon rains and searing summer heat. Despite less than optimum camp living conditions, morale was extremely high; the first half of their 6-month UDP was over and it had been a resounding success. The T-BOLTS had amassed over 1250 mishap free flight hours/925 sorties, an 85% aircraft readiness rate and significant increases in pilot CRP percentages.

ENCLOSURE (1)



ENCLOSURE [3]

NAS CUBI POINT RP, OPERATIONS. VMFA-251 deployed to NAS Cubi Point, Republic of the Philippines, to participate in Cope Thunder 89-1 and internal Air-to-Air Gunnery between 10-31 October. Unfortunately, some of this invaluable training was lost due to the late Philippine rainy season and two typhoons that hit NAS Cubi Point in the space of 5 days. Despite this adversity, the THUNDERBOLTS made the most of the bad weather and optimized the Cope Thunder sorties flown. In conjunction with VMA-214, the T-BOLTS successfully defended the Cope Thunder target areas against USAF F-15/F-16/F-4 strike packages.

On 25 October Typhoon RUBY hit NAS Cubi Point. The day prior, the T-BOLT maintenance Marines put all the Hornets in the hangar and assisted other squadrons on base secure their aircraft and equipment. During the next three days, Typhoon RUBY pounded NAS Cubi Point; during one 36-hour stretch, the winds were sustained at 55 MPH with gusts to 80 MPH. When it was over, VMFA-251 assisted in the extensive airfield clean-up and started flying. At the end of the month, VMFA-251 once again packed-up and deployed to the traditional home of MAG-15 at MCAS Iwakuni; once again they brilliantly completed a difficult and strenuous deployment and retrograde without a single mishap or injury as well as accomplishing all training objectives possible considering the Philippine weather.

MCAS IWAKUNI JAPAN, OPERATIONS. By 1 November all THUNDERBOLTS had returned from the squadron's deployment in the Philippines. After settling into their living and working spaces and giving Maintenance a chance to catch-up with the long supply reconciliation necessary after 4 months away from Iwakuni, flight operations began. Highlights of this period at MCAS Iwakuni include:

*NAS CUBI PT CORROSION DETACHMENT 1 November-15 December. Due to limited corrosion facilities at MCAS Iwakuni with all the MAG-12/15 aircraft now at home, VMFA-251 requested and received permission to set up a small corrosion detachment at NAS Cubi Pt. Corrosion and painting was performed on the last 3 squadron aircraft as preparations for the upcoming VMFA-333 aircraft transfer began.

*EXERCISE "VALIANT BLITZ" 2-14 November. Initially, operations centered around the 3rd Marine Division/1st MAW Exercise Valiant Blitz. This was an amphibious operation in South Korea in the vicinity of Pohang, an area in which the T-BOLT pilots were very familiar. Between 2-14 November the T-BOLTS flew around the clock from MCAS Iwakuni in support of this amphibious operation; missions included CAS, DAS and AAW. Every facet of the exercise was a resounding success including the "covered" radio transmissions which became routine.

*1st MAW EXERCISE "BEACH CREST 89" 26 November-15 December. Squadron detachment deployed to Kadena Air Base, Okinawa with 10 pilots, 45 maintenance Marines and 6 F/A-18s. As before in August,

extensive Air-to-Ground and Air-to-Air missions were flown in support of the 3rd Marine Division and against the JASDF F-4s and the Kadena-based USAF F-15s. Recently reworked squadron Hornet ALR-67 systems proved an invaluable tool tactically in both the AG and AA missions; for the first time ever a fleet F/A-18 squadron effectively utilized and trained with up ALR-67s in every jet.

*MAWTS-1 AIR COMBAT TACTICS (INSTRUCTOR) CERTIFICATIONS 10-15 December. Concurrently with "Beach Crest 89", VMFA-251 worked-up and certified three squadron pilots as ACT(I)s. Captain W. K. PARKER, MAWTS-1 Instructor Pilot, deployed to 1st MAW and joined VMFA-251 at Kadena Air Base for the certifications. The T-BOLT pilots virtually "aced" the extremely difficult and all-encompassing Hornet systems and tactics exam; followed by equally successful DACT sorties flown against Soviet 4th generation fighter tactics simulated by the Kadena-based F-15s. Captain PARKER described the THUNDERBOLT pilot's preparation and performance as nothing less than outstanding; he was equally impressed by the maintenance effort especially the inclusion of the ALR-67 in the Hornet tactics.

Amazingly, VMFA-251 has trained a total of 20 ACT(I)s since their standup in the F/A-18 in August 1986. Following ACT(I) certifications, the VMFA-251 detachment returned home to MCAS Iwakuni to celebrate the holidays, prepare the Hornets for the VMFA-333 transfer and get ready to deploy home to family and friends.

*VMFA-251/333 AIRCRAFT TRANSFER. Prior to their departure, the THUNDERBOLTS transferred 12 healthy Hornets to VMFA-333 actually assisting in the evolution. The two squadrons had built a relationship of trust which paid off large dividends when the VMFA-333 advance party arrived in MCAS Iwakuni and had only 8 days to accept 12 jets prior to the T-BOLT departure.

VMFA-251 CONUS REDEPLOYMENT. On 9 January 1989, VMFA-251 stood ready to redeploy to CONUS and their home station at MCAS Beaufort, South Carolina as part of MAG-31 in 2nd MAW. Their WESTPAC accomplishments were many and include over 2500 mishap free hours/1800 sorties, an 85% aircraft readiness rate, MAG-15's nomination for the 1989 Secretary of Defense Maintenance Award (PHOENIX Award) and MAG-12's nomination for the 1988 CNO Aviation Safety Award. While they had been away, the THUNDERBOLTS operated from 5 different countries around the Pacific rim as well as lived and worked in protracted field conditions for over 3 months; all the while putting teeth into the Marine Corps' MAGTF team.

MCAS BEAUFORT SC, OPERATIONS. On 10 January 1989, VMFA-251 arrived home in Beaufort, South Carolina proud and standing tall. They all enjoyed a well-earned reunion with their loved ones, and then hit the deck running when they came back to work after a 96-hour liberty call. The squadron was literally about to "explode"; within one month after their return, 5 of 18 pilots would execute PCS orders. At the 3-month point, another 3 pilots would be gone; by 6

months, 5 more pilots gone for total of 13 of 18, including the CO and XO. Throughout the squadron, the picture among the enlisted Marines was the same. Yet the THUNDERBOLTS never flinched; they had trained the younger Marines, both officer and enlisted, in formal schools as part of the WESTPAC workups and they filled the gaps magnificently. Nevertheless, the major goal during the first few months after the T-BOLT return was training. Highlights of this period include:

*WTI 2-89 13 February-15 April. Squadron detachment deployed to MCAS Yuma, Arizona with 1 pilot, 25 maintenance Marines and 3 F/A-18s. Although right on the heels of their return from WESTPAC, this was a very important step towards building the T-BOLT training base. The WTI class adopted several T-BOLT tactical lessons learned from WESTPAC and incorporated them into a Tactical SOP similar to the VMFA-251 SOP.

*TOPGUN CLASS 3-89 17 March-24 April. Squadron detachment deployed to NAS Miramar, California with 1 pilot, 25 maintenance Marines and 2 F/A-18s. Building the Operations training base continued in earnest; despite multi-site basing (Beaufort, Yuma and Miramar), the THUNDERBOLT maintenance effort was superb, and the pilots excelled at TopGun and WTI.

*CLOSE AIR SUPPORT PROGRAM (CASP) 9-21 April. Squadron deployment to MCALF Bogue, North Carolina with 8 pilots, 45 maintenance Marines and 6 F/A-18s. The THUNDERBOLTS flew in a new program in support of 2nd MARDIV Infantry Company Commanders, Battalion Air Officers and FACs. This program allowed essential face-to-face debriefs daily and was recognized by Col J.J. DOYLE, 2nd MARDIV G-3, as "..the best training outside of CAX that we've done."

*MULTI-SITE BASING OPERATIONS. As before in WESTPAC, the T-BOLTS found themselves operating from up to 4 different air bases within 3 months after returning home to MAG-31. Unfortunately, they had lost many of their experienced Marines; however, meticulous planning by all Departments ensured these operations were flown without a hitch in traditional T-BOLT fashion.

*FORMAL SCHOOL TRAINING. VMFA-251 has felt that Marine Officers/SNCOs/NCOs do a better job when they receive formal school training over and above what they receive prior to coming to the FMF. Consequently, many of the T-BOLT Marines underwent school training after their return from WESTPAC; these schools included AIM-7 "Sparrow," Aviation Safety Officer (ASO), Aircraft Maintenance Officer (AMO), Maintenance Division Officer, Landing Signal Officer (LSO) and Admin Officer training for the pilots. The SNCOs/NCOs went to Admin Chief, Maintenance Control, Aircraft Logs and Records, Quality Assurance, Corrosion Control, Tool Room/IMRL and Maintenance Shop Supervisor.

*FMFLANT EXERCISE "SOLID SHIELD-89" 4-21 May. VMFA-251 was the primary MAG-31 F/A-18 squadron participating in SS-89 including a squadron deployment to MCALF Bogue with 12 pilots, 65 maintenance Marines and 10 F/A-18s between 13-21 May. Every facet of Marine Aviation was exercised during SS-89 as the THUNDERBOLTS flew extensively in the AG and AA arenas.

*USAF 422ND TES'S EVALUATION OF SOVIET 4TH GENERATION FIGHTER TACTICS 9-25 June. Squadron deployment to Nellis AFB, Nevada with 16 pilots, 95 maintenance Marines and 10 F/A-18s. After 5 months of detachments and formal school training, the new THUNDERBOLTS with their training base of WTIs and TopGun grads complete, deployed to Nellis AFB to evaluate new tatcics against the Soviet Flanker/ Fulcrum threat.

AVIATION AND GROUND SAFETY. A commitment to professional airmanship, sound academics and ground training, effective maintenance practices and active hazard recognition allowed VMFA-251 to keep their Marines alive and equipment intact. At VMFA-251, professionalism permeates the Command; their pilots adhere to the Flight SOP and thoroughly debrief every mission leaving the "Who" out while focusing on learning objectives, their maintenance Marines concentrate on doing the job right within the guidelines of the NAMP and finally every T-BOLT is a Safety Officer responsible to the Commanding Officer. As a result, the THUNDERBOLTS achieved the following unsurpassed safety milestones:

* Entered 7th Year Mishap Free with over 26,000 Total Hours Since Last Class A Mishap

* Winner of the 1987 CNO Aviation Safety Award and nominated as the MAG-12 Squadron for the 1988 CNO Aviation Safety Award

* Surpassed over 26,000 Mishap Free Flight Hours in the F-4 and F/A-18

* 4767.5 Mishap Free Flight Hours in CY-88

* Active Hazard Reporting/NATOPS Program

  - 35 NAMDRPs
  - 21 F/A-18 System Trouble Reports (STRs)
  - 11 Aviation Safety Articles
  - 4 Hazard Reports
  - 2 TACMAN Changes
  - 1 ALR-67 Trouble Report

* Six Consecutive FMFLANT Aviation Safety Awards (1983-1988)

* Operated Safely and Successfully During this Period Including Over 7 Months of Squadron Deployed Time with Over 4 Months of Field Duty at Yechon Air Base, ROK and MCALF Bogue

ENCLOSURE (1)



ENCLOSURE [3]

These accomplishments directly reflect an exceptionally professional attitude towards safe operations and maintenance by every THUNDERBOLT.

MCCRES/INSPECTION SUMMARY. The THUNDERBOLT pre-UDP inspection cycle consisted of multiple H&MS-31 QA Audits, a 2nd MAW Wing Internal Inspection, a Wing Maintenance A&M Inspection, an NBC MCCRES Evaluation, a Unit MCCRES as well as a 1st MAW Maintenance Inspection in WESTPAC. Countless hours of preparation allowed VMFA-251 to achieve the following remarkable results:

*2nd MAW NBC Squadron of the Year 1987/Highest NBC Evaluation in 2nd MAW 1988

*Wing Internal Inspection 1988

- 24 Excellents (Highest Possible Grade)
- 11 Above Averages
- 6 Averages
- 0 Below Averages
- 0 Unsatisfactory

*2nd MAW Maintenance A&M Inspection...Excellent with Inspector comments"...one of the best Maintenance Departments in the Wing".

*1st MAW Maintenance Inspection...Excellent after 10 weeks of protracted field duty at Yechon Air Base, ROK

*MCCRES-Combat Ready

*CNAL/2nd MAW/MALS-31 Post-Deployment Maintenance Inspections - All completed with Excellent Results

EXCELLENCE IN AVAITION MAINTENANCE. The THUNDERBOLT Maintenance Department excelled while supporting aggressive operational commitments in CONUS/WESTPAC and simultaneously meeting the demands of an unprecendented number of Technical Directives related to their older Lot VI F/A-18s. Prior to UDP, the Maintenance Department coordinated a masisve effort to incorporate all outstanding Hornet TDCs to allow the jets 12 months overseas without constant TDC modification. Concurrently, VMFA-251 flew a full Flight Hour Program (FHP) with reduced "A" status aircraft and trained the squadron's new pilots. While in WESTPAC, the THUNDERBOLTS normally operated from several bases concurrently and the strain on Maintenance was constant; sound maintenance practices and a close working relationship between "Ops and Maintenance" ensured VMFA-251 never exceeded the boundaries of safe flight. Highlights of this period include:

*F/A-18 LOT VI "STRUCTURAL MOD". Prior to UDP, NAD Jacksonville personnel deployed to MCAS Beaufort and opened a depot-level "drive-in" modification line for the VMFA-251 aircraft. 12 squadron air-

craft went through the "Structural Mod" program which incorporated all outstanding Hornet TDCs and required 5-7 weeks per jet.

*GE F-404 POWER PLANT CHANGES. During the same period, fleet identified engine problems required VMFA-251 to incorporate numerous Hornet TDCs requiring removal and reinstallation of the GE F-404. TDCs incorporated include:

AFC 99 Engine Mount Fasteners
PPC 57 After-Burner Spray Bars
PPC 59 HPC Viton-Coated Ducts
PPC 60 AirLANT-Directed Low Time HPCs

The incorporation of these TDCs required the removal and reinstallation of more than 320 GE F-404 engines and does not count engines removed for unscheduled NMCM maintenance. This is a staggering feat especially since it was performed mishap free while flying a full flight schedule.

*F/A-18 "LEX MOD". This was VMFA-251's last major MCAIR/NAD Hornet MOD prior to WESTPAC. 3 TDCs were incorporated including AFC 102/LEX FENCE, AFB 109/Engine Mount Fasteners and PPC 60/AirLANT directed low time HPCs.

The challenges to Maintenance with these MODs were constant in nature and monumental in size. The actual time required to coordinate all these MODs and simulataneously perform scheduled maintenance and support all operational commitments was staggering. Nevertheless, that is exactly what the THUNDERBOLT Maintenance Department did.

*VMFA-251 TRANSCON/PAC. On 16 July 1988, VMFA-251 established a first for Marine Aviation by flight ferrying 12 F/A-18s from MCAS Beaufort to Yechon Air Base, Republic of Korea in just 5 days. This was an awesome display of USMC/Hornet capabilities. The Maintenance Depatrment spent countless hours preparing for this evolution which paid off while enroute as every problem encountered was overcome.

*1988 MCAA EXCEPTIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARD. As a result of noteworthy leadership and exceptional achievements in the THUNDERBOLT Maintenance Department, Master Sergeant M.S. MULLEN, VMFA-251 Maintenance/Material Control Chief, received this prestigious award from the Marine Corps Aviation Association in October 1988.

*VMFA-251 IDENTIFIED ALR-67 PROBLEMS. During their stay at Yechon, the Maintenance Department identified a persistent problem with the aircraft's ALR-67 system and identified this to MAG-15/1st MAW. Subsequently, an ALR-67 systems expert from NWC China Lake helped solve these problems and additonal problems with the IMA test bench repair. These repairs rippled through WESTPAC Hornet activities as additonal squadrons had the same problem.

*MCAS BEAUFORT OPERATIONS January-June 1989. As the THUNDERBOLT pilots departed the squadron, so did a massive amount of maintenance Marines. However, prior planning and a firm commitment to formal school training at the FASO Naval Aviation Mainenance Program (NAMP) courses carried the Maintenance Department quite nicely.

Between 1 July 1988 and 30 June 1989, the THUNDERBOLTS logged 85,032 total maintenance manhours, including over 3,000 in support of TDCs, while exceeding all 3M goals:

| | All USN/USMC Hornet Activities | VMFA-251 |
|---|---|---|
| Mission Capable | 70.6 | 85.3 |
| Full Mission Capable | 62.5 | 74.2 |
| Not MC (Maintenance) | 18.0 | 12.3 |
| Partial MC (Maintenance) | 3.7 | 1.6 |
| Utilization | 35.5 | 38.9 |
| CANNS per 100 Flight Hours | 12.0 | 6.6 |
| DMMHPFH | 12.4 | 13.0 |

VMFA-251 surpassed all other Hornet activities by 15% MC and 12% FMC, a clearly commendable performance in light of the older Lot VI aircraft, some of which exceed 1500 flight hours since new.

SUMMARY. VMFA-251's operational achievements, combat readiness and overall performance during the last year have surpassed their highest expectations. Despite a potential for failure presented by the oldest F/A-18 fleet aircraft and a rigorous WESTPAC deployment charactized by multi-site operations, the T-BOLTS flew 4632.0 mishap free flight hours amassing over 26,000 hours without an accident in high performance aircraft. The following additional achievements are worthy of mention:

*Recipient of the 1987 CNO Aviation Safety Award

*Over 7 Months Deployed; 4 Months Field Duty (July 1988-June 1989)

*26,000 Mishap Free Flight Hours (June 1989)

*2nd MAW NBC Squadron of the Year 1987

*2nd MAW Highest NBC MCCRES Evaluation Grade 1988

*2nd MAW Highest MCCRES Evaluation Grade 1988

*Six Consecutive FMFLANT Aviation Safety Awards (1983-1988)

*Incorporated 40 Major F/A-18 TDCs Requiring 320 Engine Changes

*Set Records for WESTPAC, TransCON/PAC, FFARP and CAX

ENCLOSURE (1)



ENCLOSURE (1)

*Exceeded Fleetwide MC/FMC Goals by 15%/12% Respectively

*Achieved 100% Sortie Completion/Ordnance Drop Rates

*Exceeded Command Retention Goals by 150%

*Received Excellent or Above on Every Major Inspection

*Certified/Recertified a Cadre of 20 ACT(I)s

Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 251 continues to set the pace for Marine Aviation, performing their demanding mission safely and efficiently. The THUNDERBOLTS are recommended with the utmost enthusiasm for the 1989 Commandant's Aviation Efficiency Trophy.

ENCLOSURE (1)



ENCLOSURE (1)

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

**JULY 1988** **460.1 Hours / 204 Sorties**

* Completed all pre-WestPac milestones, including 30 major F/A-18 TDCs incorporated requiring 320 engine changes, a 12 month Family Readiness Program and the highest 2nd MAW MCCRES and WII Inspections

* 12 Hornets TransCON/PACed from MCAS Beaufort to Yechon Air Base, Republic of Korea in 5 days via MCAS El Toro, MCAS Kaneohe Bay and Wake Island with no enroute delays, aborts or cancellations

* VMFA-251 Main Body arrived Yechon Air Base 15 July, commenced flight operations 21 July while living and working in austere field conditions at Yechon

* Achieved six years and 22,250.7 mishap-free flight hours

**AUGUST 1988** **352.1 Hours / 316 Sorties**

* Squadron Detachment participated in the 1st MAW "WINGEX" supporting 3rd Marine Division and the JASDF 313 Air Division at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa Japan 17-28 August

* Squadron Detachment participated in the USAF's 432 TFW F-16 Operational Readiness Inspection (ORI) at Misawa Air Base, Japan 26 August-15 September

* Squadron Maintenance Detachment established at MCAS Iwakuni, Japan to perform aircraft corrosion inspections

* VMFA-251 Main Body continued operations in the field at Yechon while supporting up to 3 detachments away from home base

* Master Sergeant M. S. MULLEN, VMFA-251 Maintenance/Material Control Chief, awarded the MCAA 1988 "Exceptional Achievement Award" for excellence in aircraft maintenance

**SEPTEMBER 1988** **476.6 Hours / 408 Sorties**

* Completed Misawa Air Base USAF F-16 DACT Detachment

* Completed corrosion inspections on 6 aircraft at MCAS Iwakuni

* Successfully completed the 1st MAW ALMAT Maintenance Inspection after 3 months of field duty at Yechon Air Base with Excellent Results

* Incorporated 87X Software Changes into 12 F/A-18 squadron aircraft

ENCLOSURE (2)



ENCLOSURE (3)

* Provided United States Military Presence during the 1988 Seoul Summer Olympics

* Identified significant F/A-18 ALR-67 hardware/wiring problems and requested MAG-15 and CNAP assistance

**OCTOBER 1988** **303.0 Hours / 237 Sorties**

* Provided continued United States Military Presence during the 1988 Seoul Summer Olympics and shut down the MAG-15 (Forward) Camp upon the Olympics completion.

* Squadron Deployment to NAS Cubi Point, Republic of the Philippines 7-31 October

* Participated in Cope Thunder 89-1

* Squadron retrograde to MCAS Iwakuni, Japan on 31 October

* Squadron Maintenance Detachment established at NAS Cubi Point to continue performing aircraft corrosion inspections

**NOVEMBER 1988** **592.5 Hours / 388 Sorties**

* Completed ECM sweeps on all squadron aircraft with an assist from MAG-15 and NWC China Lake; all ALR-67 systems verified and operational

* Participated in exercise "Valiant Blitz" in the Republic of Korea flying CAS and DAS missions in support of 3rd Marine Division

* Completed corrosion inspections on 3 aircraft at NAS Cubi Point

* Incorporated AFC-152 (Speed Brake Fastener) on 9 squadron aircraft requiring the removal and reinstallation of 18 engines in a 5 day period

* Squadron Safety Standdown 17 November

* Squadron Detachment particiapted in the 1st MAW exercise "Beach Crest 89" flying multimission Strike, CAS and AAW sorties at Kadena Air Base 26 November - 15 December

**DECEMBER 1988** **321.7 Hours / 267 Sorties**

* Completed exercise "Beach Crest 89"

* 3 squadron pilots certified as ACT(I)s flying against USAF F-15s

* Completed comprehensive Pre-Mishap Drill, Casualty Drill and "Hands On" Aircraft Mishap Board training evaluated by MAG-12 DSS

* Participated in the MAG-15 decommissioning ceremony at MCAS Iwakuni

* Transferred 12 Lot VI F/A-18s to VMFA-333 on 31 December 1988 prior to return to CONUS

* VMFA-251 Advance Party accepted 11 Lot VI F/A-18s from VMFA-115

**JANUARY 1989** **168.5 Hours / 145 Sorties**

* Nominated as MAG-12's primary candidate for the 1988 CNO Aviation Safety Award

* Successfully completed UDP deployment to 1st MAW and returned home to MCAS Beaufort, South Carolina on 10 January

* Squadron Safety Standdown 17 January

* Assumed the 6th MEB MPF duties

**FEBRUARY 1989** **355.5 Hours / 300 Sorties**

* Squadron Detachment participated in WTI 2-89 at MCAS Yuma 13 February - 15 April

* Participated in MAG-31 AAWEX at MCAS Beaufort 2-4 Febraury

* Participated in DACT against Navy Fighter Weapons School (TOPGUN) deployed to MCAS Beaufort 20-24 February

* Completed 25,000 mishap-free flight hours

* Accepted 1 Lot IX F/A-18 from VFA-106

* Completed AFB-172 (Coaxial Cable) and IAFC 101 (Gun Hoist Receptacle) on 12 aircraft

**MARCH 1989** **446.8 Hours / 337 Sorties**

* Participated in Joint Training Readiness Exercise (JTRE) at Fort Bragg 6-10 March

* Squadron Detachment participated in TOPGUN Class 3-89 at NAS Miramar 17 March - 24 April

* Squadron Detachment at WTI 2-89 13 February - 15 April

* LZ Bluebird 3-8 March

ENCLOSURE (2)



ENCLOSURE (3)

* Participated in DACT missions in support of VMA-124 17-20 March

* Successfully completed the MALS-31 QA Audit and 2nd MAW Post Deployment maintenance inspections with superior results

**APRIL 1989** **293.2 Hours / 234 Sorties**

* Squadron Deployment participated in CASP/FSCEX in support of 2nd Marine Division Forward Air Controller (FAC) training at MCALF Bogue 9-21 April

* Squadron Detachment completed WTI 2-89 15 April

* Squadron Detachment completed TOPGUN Class 3-89 23 April

* Successfully completed the CNAL Maintenance Inspection with superior results

**MAY 1989** **440.0 Hours / 376 Sorties**

* All TBOLT Marines home at MCAS Beaufort after 4-site flight operations during April at MCAS Yuma, NAS Miramar, MCALF Bogue and MCAS Beaufort

* New pilot work-ups

* Participated in exercise "Solid Shield 89" at MCAS Beaufort 6-13 May and Squadron Deployment to MCALF Bogue 13-20 May

* Squadron pilots attended formal ASO, LSO and AMO school training

**JUNE 1989** **422.0 Hours / 329 Sorties**

* LtCol R. W. Walker relieved LtCol R. A. Maddocks, Jr. as the Commanding Officer VMFA-251

* Squadron Deployment to Nellis AFB, Nevada participated in the USAF's 422 TES evaluation of Soviet 4th generation fighters against MAGTF F/A-18 Strike/Fighter tactics 9-25 June

* Achieved 26,686.7 flight hours and seven years mishap free

## STATISTICAL SUMMARY

UNIT: Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 251

AWARD: 1989 Commandant's Aviation Efficiency Trophy

SAFETY DATA:

| | |
|---|---|
| Published Safety Articles | 11 |
| F/A-18 NATOPS Recommendations | 2 |
| F/A-18 TACMAN Recommendations | 2 |
| Major Accidents | 0 |
| Minor Incidents | 0 |
| Incidents | 0 |
| Fatalities | 0 |
| Hours Flown Since Last Major Accident | 26,686.7 |

FLIGHT DATA:

| | Last Year 1 Jul 87-30 Jun 88 | Current Year 1 Jul 88-30 Jun 89 |
|---|---|---|
| Operational Readiness (MC) | 84.0% | 85.3% |
| Full Systems Capability (FMC) | 81.0% | 74.2% |
| Utilization Rate | 40 | 39 |
| FSC Sorties | 3573 | 3356 |
| Total Sorties | 3742 | 3541 |
| Total Hours | 4845.6 | 4632.0 |
| Weeks Deployed | 9 | 30 (16 In Field) |

PERSONNEL DATA: (1 Jul 88 - 30 Jun 89)

First Term Reenlistments: 150%

Retention Rates

| | |
|---|---|
| Intermediate: | 200% |
| Career: | 143% |

Officer Augmentation Rates:

| | |
|---|---|
| Requested: | 0 (None Eligible) |
| Approved: | N/A |

Non-EAS Attrition: 0

Off-Duty Education: 7

GEDs Completed: N/A (None Eligible)

MCI/Extension Courses Completed: 255

## SQUADRON HISTORY

Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 251 was commissioned 1 December 1941, at NAS North Island, California as Marine Observation Squadron 251 (VMO-251), flying the Grumman F-4F "Wildcat". During World War II, the squadron participated in South Pacific campaigns at Guadalcanal, Southern and Northern Solomons, Santa Cruz, Luzon and the Southern Philippines. During 1944 the squadron transitioned to the F-4U "Corsair" and was redesignated Marine Fighter Squadron 251. VMF-251 continued combat operations in the South Pacific until 1 May 1945 when it flew its last World War II mission while supporting clean up operations at Leyte. On 1 June 1945, VMF-251 was decommissioned at Samar, Philippine Islands.

On 1 July 1946, VMF-251 was recommissioned as a Ready Reserve squadron at Gross Isle, Michigan. With the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950, VMF-251 was recalled to active service and transitioned to the AD-4B "Skyraider". In late April 1951, the squadron transferred to MCAS El Toro, California, completed transition and was redesignated Marine Attack Squadron 251 (VMA-251) on 25 April 1951. The squadron deployed to Korea in June 1953 and participated in the final phases of the Korean War, accumulating 310 combat sorties/550 hours in two weeks. VMA-251 had the distinction of having the last Marine aircraft engaged in combat during the Korean War on 27 July 1953.

Following the Korean War "Cease Fire", VMA-251 provided air defense along the Demilitarized Zone for over two years. In January 1956, the squadron deployed to MCAS Iwakuni, Japan for an additional 15 months of Far East duty. In April 1957, VMA-251 returned home to MCAS Miami, Florida and began transition to the FJ-6 "Fury". With the completion of transition to the FJ-6 came the redesignation to VMF-251 on 20 April 1957. One year later the squadron moved to MCAS El Toro, California, and received its first supersonic fighter, the F-8U "Crusader".

After two tours to the Far East, VMF-251 relocated to MCAS Beaufort, South Carolina in January 1961, which has been its home station ever since. Most notably from January to August 1962, VMF-251 was the first Marine F-8 squadron to day/night carrier qualify while deployed to the Mediterranean Sea as part of CAG-10 aboard the USS SHANGRI-LA (CVA-38). During the cruise, VMF-251 amassed over 500 flight hours in one month and broke all existing 6th Fleet F-8 squadron flight time records. During July 1963, VMF-251 received the Second Marine Aircraft Wing Commanding General's Award winning overall competion and first place awards in Air-to-Air Gunnery and Sidewinder missile shoots.

In October 1964, the squadron received its current designation as Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 251, the first squadron in the Second Marine Aircraft Wing to transition to the F-4B "Phantom II". The Thunderbolts flew the F-4, in four different models, for the

next 21 years. The squadron received the 1967 CNO Aviation Safety Award and in 1969 the Robert M. Hanson Award as the "Marine Fighter Squadron of the Year". That same year the squadron also won the CNO Aviation Safety Award as the first F-4 squadron to surpass 25,000 mishap-free flight hours.

In 1978, VMFA-251 received the Commandant's Aviation Efficiency Trophy as the "Most Outstanding Marine Squadron of the Year" and recognized for superior performance during its one year deployment to WestPac (July 1977-July 1978) and for an outstanding training program as the first Marine squadron to transition to the newest version of the Phantom, the F-4S. VMFA-251 flew its last Phantom in November 1985, 21 years and over 85,000 flight hours after receiving its first F-4.

During January 1986, the Thunderbolts began transition to the F/A-18 "Hornet". The squadron stood up as the sixth Marine F/A-18 squadron the following August, and reported fully combat ready in record time during March 1987. On 24 January 1988, the THUNDERBOLTS completed 20,000 hours mishap-free in both the F-4 and F/A-18 and were awarded the 1987 CNO Aviation Safety Award.

In July 1988, VMFA-251 deployed to WestPac as part of the Marine Corps' 6-month UDP program. The squadron TRANSCON/PACed 12 F/A-18s from MCAS Beaufort to Yechon Air Base, Republic of Korea in just 5 days via MCAS El Toro, MCAS Kaneohe Bay and Wake Island. During their 6 month stay, the THUNDERBOLT pilots and Marines operated from Yechon, Misawa Air Base Japan, NAS Cubi Point RP, Kadena Air Base Okinawa, Osan Air Base Korea, Kunsan Air Base Korea and MCAS Iwakuni Japan. On 10 January 1989, VMFA-251 re-deployed home to MAG-31 and MCAS Beaufort, South Carolina.

PROPOSED CITATION

The Commandant of the Marine Corps takes pleasure in presenting the 1989 COMMANDANT'S AVIATION EFFICIENCY TROPHY to

MARINE FIGHTER ATTACK SQUADRON 251

for service as set forth in the following CITATION:

"For outstanding service in the accomplishment of the mission of Marine Aviation during the period 1 July 1988 to 30 June 1989. During this twelve month period, the THUNDERBOLTS of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 251, Marine Aircraft Group 31, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing, Fleet Marine Force Atlantic, demonstrated superb leadership, unparalleled tactical expertise, and the highest levels of combat readiness while operating at remote sites in the Western Pacific and continental United States. Commencing with a flawless TransCON/ TransPAC of 12 F/A-18s from MCAS Beaufort, SC to Yechon Air Base, Republic of Korea, followed by a 6-month UDP with MAG-15 in WESTPAC, United States Military Presence in Korea for the 1988 Seoul Summer Olympics, ACT(I) certifications for 3 squadron pilots by MAWTS-1 Instructors, to the Close Air Support Program with 2nd MARDIV and "Solid Shield 89" both at MCALF Bogue, VMFA-251 distinguished themselves repeatedly as the East Coast F/A-18 "Hornet" tactical innovators. This was never more evident than during exercise "Beach Crest 89" when VMFA-251 deployed to Kadena Air Base, Okinawa in support of 3rd MARDIV and performed Close Air Support on time and with deadly accuracy. The THUNDERBOLT maintenance effort was noteworthy incorporating over 30 HORNET TDCs requiring 320 engine removals/reinstallations prior to WESTPAC. This was followed by over 7 months deployed time; 4 months of which were in the field at Yechon Air Base and MCALF Bogue all without mishap or injury. VMFA-251 flew over 4600 mishap free flight hours, over 26,000 total flight hours since their last mishap, received the 1988 FMFLANT Aviation Safety Award and reaffirmed it's commitment to excellence through determination and hard work. The noteworthy performance of the THUNDERBOLTS is indicative of the apex in outstanding leadership, professionalism and "esprit de corps", which is in keeping with the highest traditions of Marine Aviation and the United States Marine Corps. VMFA-251's outstanding achievements have earned them the 1989 Commandant's Aviation Efficiency Trophy."