

(1) VMFA-251 flight operations during January included 162 sorties for 275.0 flight hours.

(2) The Squadron conducted a "Back in the Saddle" Safety Stand Down on 6-7 January. The theme of the Stand Down was "Safety through Knowledge", and use was made of the Squadron's video tape equipment. LtCol. JAHN, 2d Marine Air Wing Standardization and Safety Officer made a presentation to all officers as did MAJ. RICHARDSON, the F-4 Analyst at the Naval Safety Center. The Naval Safety Center Team included a presentation to the enlisted personnel. Ordnance safety was stressed due to this Squadrons' heavy commitments in the Third Quarter of FY-75. The entire program was under the cognizance of FltLt J. HAINES, RAF, VMFA-251 Aviation Safety Officer.

(3) MAJ. N. G. G. KERR participated in the "Seek Eval" project, a Martin Marietta Company project at Orlando, Fla. on 6-8 January, 1975.

(4) During the Second Quarter of 1974, the Squadron enjoyed a 93 percent passing rate on the PFT.

(5) During 1974, 100 percent of the Squadron's Marines who fired either the .45 or .38 caliber pistol qualified; 93 percent of those firing the Rifle Range "B" course qualified, and 91 percent of those firing on the "KD" course qualified.

(6) On 8 January, 1975, the Commanding Officer of MAG-31 recommended to the Commanding General of the Second Marine Air Wing that VMFA-251 be awarded the Commanding General's Ground Safety Award for 1974.

(7) In the January, 1975 issue of the Naval Aviation Safety Center magazine APPROACH, the Squadron's new video tape training system was featured. This utilization of a systems approach to training by the Squadron was cited for its applications in furthering operational safety and readiness.

(8) On 21-24 January, 1975, the Squadron participated in an Operational Readiness Inspection (O.R.I.) serving as the Contingency Squadron for PROVMAF - 40.

(9) On 27-30 January 1975, the Squadron provided aircrew, manpower, aircraft, and equipment augmentation in support of PROVMAF-20 and VMFA-451 tactical test.

(10) On 30 January, 1975, the squadron hosted COL. CHAPLIN, FMFLant Inspector who headed the Force Inspection Team evaluating PROVMAF-20.

J. L. MAVRETIC as Commanding Officer of Marine Fighter Attack Squadron 251, in a ceremony held on the VMFA-251 flight line.

b. February

(1) In February 1975 this squadron flew 230 sorties for 336.4 flight hours.

(2) The Squadron initiated a program in compliance with the Commanding General, 2d Marine Aircraft Wing directive to conduct Training and Safety Stand Down on each Monday. Pertinent and lively aircrew briefs and presentations were produced by the Aircrew Training, Safety, and Natops Officers.

(3) On 3 February, 1975, the Squadron received a brief from the MAG-31 Assistant Operations Officer, MAJ DANIELS, concerning implementation of the daily discrete call sign frequency switching to be employed by all 2d Marine Air Wing Tactical Units.

(4) On 10 February, 1975, the Squadron reinstituted a program of weekly detailed inspections of aircraft by assigned aircrew teams and plane captains.

(5) During this month, the Squadron received a "noteworthy" for achieving greater than 93% active enrollment in Marine Corps Institute courses.

(6) On 24-26 February, 1975, the Squadron provided fighter aircraft support for the Basic School Landing Exercise held at Marine Corps Base, Camp Le Jeune, North Carolina.

(7) On 26-27 February, 1975, the Squadron hosted Wing Commander G. FARLEY of the Royal Air Force British Defense Staff, Washington D.C.

(8) On 23-28 February, 1975, MAJ N. G. G. KERR, the Squadron Operations Officer, participated in the acceptance evaluation of the 2 F-55 training device at the Naval Training Equipment Center, Orlando, Florida. At that time, the training device was found unacceptable and was rejected on behalf of the Marine Corps.

c. March

(1) In March, 1975, VMFA-251 flew 266 sorties for 394.5 flight hours.

(2) On 1 March, 1975, the Squadron assumed duty as the Contingency Squadron, PROVMAG-80, in support of the 38th Marine Amphibious Unit.

(3) On 8 March, 1975, VMFA-251 was assigned as the Contingency Squadron for PROVMAG-40 in support of the 34th MAU.

(4) During March, Third Quarter PFT testing was completed. The Squadron attained a 95% passing rate, with 25 Marines First Class, and only one failure.

d.. April

(1) In April, 1975, the Squadron flew 445 sorties for 527.3 flight hours.

(2) On 5 April, 1975, the Squadron successfully deployed 12 aircraft with a full complement of personnel and support equipment to MCAS, Yuma, Arizona. The deployment was made to utilize the superb facilities for air to air and air to ground weapons employment training.

(3) On 7 April, 1975 the Squadron welcomed and hosted Major General A.W. O'Donnell to our Yuma Deployment. The General flew four air to ground sorties with the squadron before departing on, 10 April, 1975.

(4) On 10-11 April, 1975, a Squadron representative attended the Navy Fighter Weapons School Annual Symposium at NAS Miramar, California.

(5) On 10-11 April, 1975, VMFA-251 was tasked by CG 2d Marine Air Wing to conduct dissimilar ACM with the AV-8A Harrier. The program was initiated to document the concept of vectored thrust and its role in ACM. A total of five sorties were flown, and video taped on the Air Combat Maneuvering Range (ACMR).

(6) On 14 April, 1975 Capt W. W. MOORE, Squadron RIO Training Officer attained the milestone of 1,000 accident free flight hours in the F-4J aircraft.

(7) On 27 April, 1975, all Squadron aircraft were launched on cross country ferry flights to return to home base. Squadron aircraft #08 (OW 153770) was destroyed in an accident during landing at Reese Air Force Base, Lubbock, Texas. The crew was rescued in satisfactory condition with major leg injuries.

(8) During the month of May VMFA-251 flew 214 sorties for 322.8 hours.

5750 14 JUL 1975

14 JULY 1975

(2) On 5-9 May 1975, the Squadron conducted a Missile Firing Exercise in the W-122 area under the supervision of Marine Air Weapons Training Unit, Atlantic (MATULANT) and controlled by Marine Air Control Squadron Six (MACS-6). The Squadron qualified 10 crews while firing 8 AIM-7E Sparrows and 8 AIM-9G Sidewinder missiles.

(3) On 12-14 May 1975, the Squadron was tasked with a Training and Readiness Evaluation (T.R.E.) administered by a 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing Inspection Team. Fighter Weapons, Fighter Escort, Air Defense, Close Air Support, Interdiction, COMPEX, and large scale strike missions were flown with satisfactory results.

f. June

(1) During the month of June, the Squadron flew 142 sorties for a total of 359.9 flight hours.

(2) During 1-6 June, 1975, the Squadron participated in operation Solid Shield 1975. Two Close Air Support (CAS) and 44 Combat Air Patrol (CAP) missions were flown in support of the friendly forces operation in the Camp Lejeune, North Carolina exercise area.

(3) During 7-11 June instruction and briefings were held while preparations were finalized for the Trans Atlantic deployment to Rota Naval Station, Spain.

(4) On 11 June, the squadron welcomed aboard Brig. General Bjorklund on his visit to this command. The General received a briefing on exercise Agile Condor (Trans Atlantic Deployment).

(5) On 12 June, 1975, the squadron commenced Operation Agile Condor departing MCAS Beaufort for Naval Station Rota, Spain with intermediate stops at NAS Bermuda and NAF Azores.

(6) On 17 June, 1975, the squadron landed nine aircraft at Naval Station, Rota, Spain.

(7) On 24 June, 1975, VMFA-251 recovered the final inbound aircraft at MCAS Beaufort and thus concluded Exercise Agile Condor.

(8) With the recovery of the remaining Transatlantic aircraft on 24 June, the Squadron ceased any further air operations during the month due to a depot level mandatory maintenance inspection of all F-4 stabilator horn assemblies.

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Authority NND 29614

5750
14 July 1975

3. Narrative Summary

The stated mission of the Marine Fighter Attack Squadron is to "intercept and destroy enemy aircraft and missiles under all weather conditions, to attack and destroy surface targets, and to conduct such other air operations as may be directed". The first six months of 1975 saw the Thunderbolts of VMFA-251 employ their F-4 Phantom aircraft in operations that spanned the entire spectrum of Marine Fighter Aviation. The Squadron gained in-depth experience in virtually every function our aircraft are capable of short of actual combat. The myriad operations and exercises that VMFA-251 has been tasked with are incidental to the primary thrust of our Squadron as set forth by our Commanding Officers. The objective has been, and continues to be to train each officer to be the best possible officer and aircrewmember within the fighter community and to be collectively, the best fighter squadron in Marine Aviation. This effort to excel has turned in an atmosphere of investigation into, and experimentation with new techniques and equipment. The Squadron has become known in these past months for its unique organization, administration, and level of training. The momentum in this Squadron effort certainly began prior to this reporting period. It was, however, during this period that the Squadron enjoyed numerous successes that must be viewed as the fruition of those aforementioned goals and policies.

An area of special pride to this command is training. While continuously leading Marine Air Group 31 in flight hours and training "X's", VMFA-251 also forged ahead in improving the quality of over all training. Our video tape cassette library has expanded as the system is put to new and imaginative uses. The routine functions of the system have been to: (a) produce standardized briefings for syllabus training missions; (b) produce Squadron ground training, and safety briefs, and, (c) to disseminate command policy or non-recurring information to all hands on an individualized basis. In April the system was used to record a dissimilar ACM program with AV-8A Harrier held on the Air Combat Maneuvering Range at MCAS Yuma. In May the system was utilized to orient all squadron personnel in the social milieu of the foreign nations to be visited during Operation Agile Condor. Video tapes were prepared specifically for this Translant operation by the Naval Human Resource Management Center, Norfolk Va. The system has also been usefull in preserving events of some historical interest such as the CMC's visit to the Squadron and a safely executed wheels up landing last year. The Cassette Video Tape System and its considerable training applications were featured in the January issue of Approach magazine.

Another innovation in training has been the creation of "FOX TWO" magazine under the auspices of our Operations Officer. The magazine is serving as a forum for concepts, developments and news peculiar to Marine Fighter Aviation. A related move was the construction of a "MIG BOARD" adjacent to the MCAS Beaufort Refueling Pits. During refueling, aircrews can observe drawn to scale pictures of enemy threat aircraft at

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Authority NND 29614

various ranges and attitudes. The MIG BOARD concept was presented in "FOX TWO" for the benefit of other interested squadrons.

A subtle but far reaching policy of our training program has been the maximum utilization of first tour aircrews. During Safety Stand Downs and pre-exercise briefings, first tour crews frequently are called upon to prepare and disseminate vital information. This policy has accelerated the 'seasoning' of young aircrewmen as it instills confidence and promotes detailed research.

The Squadrons' maintenance team has consistently provided the 'up' aircraft and systems that were required to perform the varied missions assigned. While deployed, maintenance contended with the inevitable problems in logistics and supply and produced results that are a testament to their dedication and resourcefulness.

An area of tremendous improvement in these past months has been Squadron logistics, Embarkation and IMRL. New leadership coupled with rapidly accumulated experience in the recent flurry of operations, has produced a streamlined, reliable and productive shop.

As has been previously noted, Squadron flight operations have been characterized diversity in mission and immediacy in responsiveness. Of the function that a VMFA squadron is equipped for, and trained in, we have performed the following:

a. "Intercept and destroy enemy aircraft and missiles in coordination with ground or airborne control agencies under all weather conditions." The Squadron has regularly conducted Air to Air Intercept Training in the W-157 area with the coordination of Marine Air Control Squadron - 5. The culmination of this training was the Squadrons highly successful MISSILE FIRING EXERCISE during 5-9 May utilizing Marine Air Control Squadron 6 for airborne control.

b. "Maintain the capability to attack and destroy surface targets with all types of weapons compatible with assigned aircraft." Beyond the numerous Wing Events, and Complex bombing missions, the Squadron greatly enhanced its conventional ordnance capability during its deployment to MCAS Yuma, Arizona. The abundance, proximity and variety of Air-to-Ground weapons ranges operated by MCAS Yuma provided an ideal ground attack training environment for VMFA-251.

c. "Provide escort of friendly aircraft under all-weather conditions". Both at Yuma and Beaufort, the Squadron has flown a number of strike escort missions. In Yuma, the Squadron flew escort for large flights of Marine A-4 and Navy A-7 aircraft with Marine F-8 fighters utilized as an aggressor threat element. During the Training and Readiness Evaluation (12-14 May), VMFA-251 was assigned several

14 July 1975

escort and penetration missions which furthered experience in this area.

d. "Maintain the capability to deploy and operate from aircraft carriers, advanced bases, and small airfields for tactical support (SATS)." On 18-20 March our Squadron qualified 10 aircrewmembers in Short Airfield for Tactical Support operations during training flights conducted at MCALF Bogue Field, N.C. During the Agile Condor Translant, our capability to responsively deploy to advanced bases and effectively operate from them was demonstrated.

e. "Conduct close air support within capability of assigned aircraft." As outlined in paragraph 'b' above, VMFA-251 has flown close air support sorties extensively, both in Yuma on weapons ranges, and at MCB Camp LeJeune Operating Areas.

f. "Maintain the capability to deploy or extend the range of operations by employing aerial refueling techniques." During the Trans Continental Deployment to Yuma, During the Training and Readiness Inspection (12-14 May), During Operation Solid Shield, and during Operation Agile Condor, the Squadron made maximum effective use of Marine aerial refueling resouces in completing those exercises and deployments.

The fighter mission of our men and aircraft requires that a spirit of aggressiveness, professionalism and confidence be developed and maintained. Developing this crucial fighter spirit to achieve air superiority sometimes obscures our other vital functions in projecting Marine Air power. In successfully meeting these diverse requirements, the Thunderbolts have amply demonstrated the flexibility, versatility, and responsiveness that historically have been hallmarks of Marine Corps Aviations' unique capability.

G. E. Walsh
G. E. WALSH

PHANTOM WRECKAGE — Two Marine pilots escaped death when their F4 Phantom jet crashed and disintegrated at Reese Air Force Base Sunday afternoon. Chunks of the jet were strewn over an area 50 yards long

at the north end of the base. The pilots ejected from the craft seconds before it slammed to earth. One of the pilots received a fractured leg and the other a sprained ankle. (Staff Photo by Wes Phillips)

Two Marine Pilots Eject Near Reese

TWO MARINE pilots ejected to safety Sunday afternoon when their F4 Phantom jet crashed at Reese Air Force Base.

The pilots were identified as

Maj. Michael M. Hynes and Capt. Jay M. Cuelow.

A Reese spokesman said Hynes was treated at the base hospital for a sprained ankle. Cuelow suffered a compound fracture of the left leg.

The Marines were on a cross country mission from Yuma, Ariz., to Warner-Robbins Air Force Base in Georgia. Their home base is at Beaufort S. C.

Cause of the crash had not been determined late Sunday.

Hynes and Cuelow apparently were attempting to land when the aircraft plunged to earth just off the north end of Reese's north-south runway at 2:45 p.m.

The aircraft disintegrated on impact and burst into flames. Hynes parachuted to safety a short distance from the crash site. Cuelow was swept by high winds into a boundary fence.

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ENCLOSURE