

NAS JRB Fort Worth:

Joint Training Junction



By JOC Dave Marr

Joint military training found a home on 1 October 1994 with establishment of the first joint reserve base: Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base (NAS JRB), Fort Worth, Texas. The base would provide a quality training environment for reserve components of all branches of the armed services to improve interoperability, as well as reduce redundancy and overhead by developing joint doctrine and operating procedures that allow

host and tenant commands to function effectively.

The Department of Defense recommended the cost-saving measure to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission in 1993, calling for the Navy to assume ownership of the 1,805-acre former Carswell Air Force Base and its infrastructure. Tenant commands of NAS Dallas, 35 miles to the east, would relocate to the new base during a four-year period, along with

commands from other closing military installations.

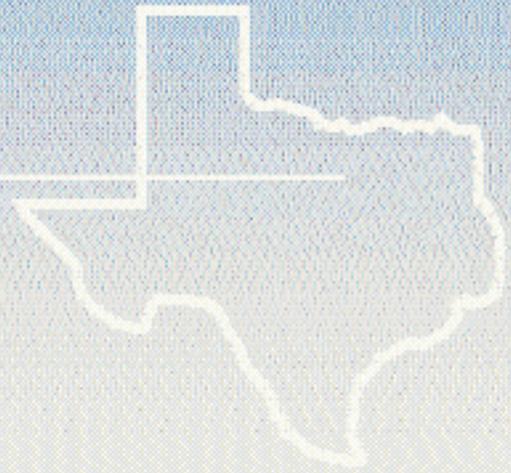
It looked good on paper, but this concept had never been tried. The uniqueness of each service left many questions on the feasibility of a multiservice base.

It's been more than three years since the beginning of the joint reserve base "experiment," and the returns indicate a near-seamless transition from blueprint to fully operational national defense asset.



PH1 (AW) Emery C. Mahaffey

Navy F-14 *Tomcats* await their turn while an F-16 *Fighting Falcon* from the Air Force Reserve's 301st Fighter Wing prepares for takeoff on 20 September 1997 during the joint exercise Texas Tyrade.



Regarded as a model for future base consolidations and joint-service cooperation, NAS JRB Fort Worth is conveniently located in the south-central United States. This accessible location is one reason why the base is becoming a preferred training site among active duty and drilling reservists of all services.

Captain Dale A. Lewelling, CO of the base since August 1996, recognizes the uniqueness of the JRB philosophy and his role in coordinating multiservice training. "As commanding officer of

a joint reserve base, you must determine

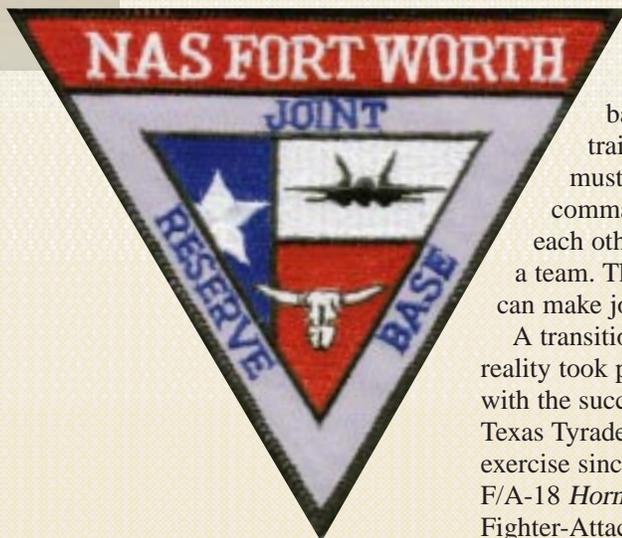
how to structure the base to get the most training for the dollar. You must ensure that all of the commands on base talk to each other and work together as a team. This is the only way you can make jointness work."

A transition from the abstract to reality took place in September 1997 with the successful completion of Texas Tyrade, the first multiservice exercise since the base opened. Five F/A-18 *Hornets* from Marine Fighter-Attack Squadron (VMFA) 112, four F-16 *Fighting Falcons* from the Air Force's 301st Fighter

Wing (301 FW), and two F-14 *Tomcats* from Navy Fighter Squadron (VF) 201 performed a simulated tactical air strike against targets in Kansas. Four KC-130 *Hercules* tankers from Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron (VMGR) 234 provided fuel. While the pilots refueled in flight, they encountered "enemy MiG-29s" portrayed by F-16s from the Iowa Air National Guard's 185th Fighter Squadron—adding another dimension to the joint-service flavor of the exercise.

"I thought Texas Tyrade was a booming success," Capt. Lewelling stated. "We were able to tie all of these units together to get a mutual benefit for training and mobilization readiness. The best part about the exercise is that we engaged all members of the joint-service team at Fort Worth, and we did it safely. The result is a better qualified and trained cadre of aviators and ground support personnel."

Timely and accurate communication among the services is critical to the success of exercises such as Texas Tyrade, as well as routine daily business at NAS JRB Fort Worth. The base CO and the commanders of each major base component discuss joint issues at a month-



NAS JRB Fort Worth

ly meeting, which is essential to achieving maximum training effectiveness and smooth interservice teamwork.

But jointness extends well beyond the ready rooms and flight lines of the base. At the Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department, Sailors and Marines work together to support Navy and Marine Corps flying units. Each service benefits with improved parts and maintenance availability, as well as additional expertise. Also, joint security and medical departments help realize significant savings in equipment and man-hours.

The mix of units assigned to the NAS JRB clearly illustrates the future of joint training. Fort Worth is home to 14 F-14 *Tomcats* of VF-201, 4 C-9 *Skytrain IIs* of Fleet Logistics Support Squadron 59, an NAS JRB Fort Worth C-12 *Huron*, 12 F/A-18 *Hornets* of VMFA-112, 14 KC-130 *Hercules* of VMGR-234, and 15 F-16 *Fighting Falcons* of the 301 FW. The 136th Tactical Airlift Wing of the Texas Air National Guard will move from NAS Dallas to Fort Worth later this year.

It's human nature to compete, but at NAS JRB Fort Worth, interservice rivalries must take a back seat to the mission—a work ethic Capt. Lewelling encourages. "The



PH2 Emmitt J. Hawks



PH2 (AW/NAC) Rob Foster

Above, Sgt. Mari Briggs and Cpl. Jason Rhea of VMFA-112 attach a dummy Sidewinder missile to an F/A-18 before Texas Tyrade. Left, Sgt. Steven A. Schmidt and AMH2 Brian W. DeNike of the Aircraft Intermediate Maintenance Department patch an F-14 intake panel. This joint-service teamwork forms the foundation of NAS JRB Fort Worth.

rivalries may surface when the Navy, Air Force and Army battle for the Commander in Chief's Trophy [recognizing the service academy with the best football record]," he said. "Otherwise, we're in the customer service business of training reservists, regard-

less of what uniforms they wear. Everything we do here is oriented toward that goal."

When asked what the future holds for NAS JRB Fort Worth, Lewelling said he and the base commanders must continue to work on initiatives that save money without compromising mobilization readiness. One project he is spearheading is the inte-



PH2 (AW/NAC) Travis Esteves

Texas Tyrade tales: Above, KC-130 *Hercules* tankers of VMGR-234 fly in formation during the exercise, and later respond to requests to “Fill ‘er up!” from a VF-201 F-14 *Tomcat*, right, and a VMFA-112 F/A-18 *Hornet*, below right.



PH2 (AW/NAC) Rob Foster

gration of training platforms, such as C-130, F-16 and F/A-18 simulators. Linking these simulators would allow, for example, an Air Force reservist to conduct real-time combat training against a naval reservist without leaving the simulator, saving significant travel dollars and providing valuable joint readiness training.

“We must structure the base to take advantage of technological advances now,” Lewelling stressed. “I not only envision linking simulators on base, but also establishing training and communication links with reservists’ commands, whether they are air or surface units, to conduct real-time exercises.”

With this technology in place, a Naval Reserve officer can conceivably walk into a command center in the Fort Worth simulator building and run a battle scenario in littoral warfare as if from the bridge of a

destroyer. The officer receives complex, top-quality training without spending travel funds.

Many hurdles remain for NAS JRB Fort Worth, including myriad renovation and new construction projects and the relocation of commands and personnel from NAS Dallas, which is scheduled to cease operations by September 1998. Nevertheless, Capt. Lewelling remains upbeat and confident, and is quick to recognize that he cannot do it alone.

“Sure, we’ve come a long way,”



PH2 (AW/NAC) Travis Esteves

he said, “but in some respects we’ve only started. It will take a lot of effort from the joint-service team to make it happen. Fortunately, I work with the best people in the business to get the job done.” 

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