

Training the Best with the Best

By RAdm. Michael Bucchi, Chief of Naval Air Training



The Naval Air Training Command (NATRA-COM) is continuously renewing the next generation of Naval Aviators to meet the complex day-to-day challenges facing a forward-deployed Navy. While the training command is putting pilots and Naval Flight Officers (NFOs) in the operational commands of the Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, Air Force and allied forces, students and instructors alike experience some of the most satisfying flight opportunities and missions anywhere. More to the point, NATRACOM is training the world's finest aviators *with* the world's finest aviators.

Even during these times of austere budgets, the Navy continues to keep the instructor ranks full. The demand for quality aviators in the fleet has not diminished, and the dedicated instructors throughout the training command are taking up the challenge.

The five training air wings (TRAWING), based aboard five different naval air stations throughout the southeastern United States, employ many different aircraft platforms. These include the T-2 *Buckeye*, TA-4 *Skyhawk* and T-45 *Goshawk* in TRAWING-1, Meridian, Miss.; T-45 in TRAWING-2, Kingsville, Texas; T-34C *Turbo-Mentor*, T-44 *Pegasus* and TC-12 *Super King Air* in TRAWING-4, Corpus Christi, Texas; T-34C and TH-57 *Sea Ranger* in TRAWING-5, Whiting Field, Fla.; and T-34C, T-2 and T-39 *Sabreliner* in TRAWING-6, Pensacola, Fla. This variety of aircraft

ensures that our instructors can provide top-notch education at each stage of the training curricula, while themselves enjoying an incomparable amount of seat time. For example, helicopter instructor duty gives aviators an excellent opportunity to spend time out of the office and in the air (see story, p. 16).

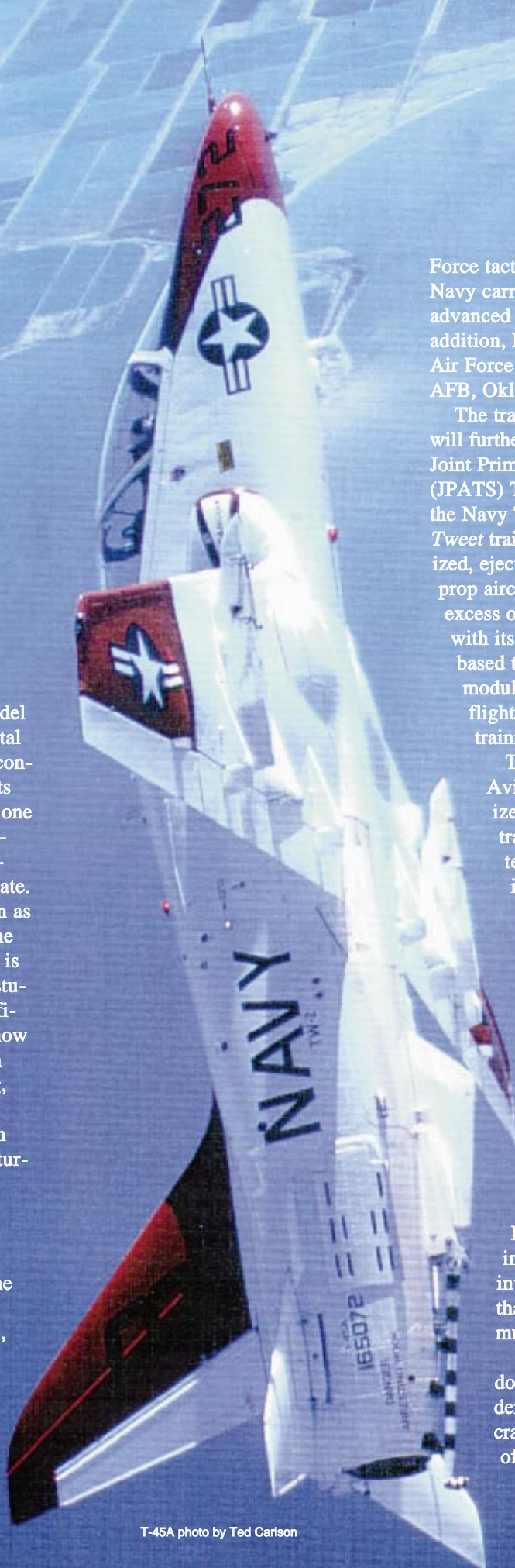
Today's jet instructors have new tools in their arsenal to ensure that students' transition from training to operational flying proceeds even more smoothly than before. The T-45 Training System (T-45TS), comprising integrated computer-based administrative and academic models and

Right, Marine Capt. Zachary J. Foeller, a T-45 instructor in TRAWING-2, NAS Kingsville, Texas, does his part in "training the best *with* the best." Photo by Ted Carlson.



visual simulators, places students higher on the learning curve than older T-2/TA-4 curricula. The newest training asset is the C-model *Goshawk* with Cockpit-21, a digital system that closely parallels the configuration of fleet aircraft cockpits (see story, p. 22). The T-45TS is one way the training command is supporting the fleet with a more efficiently prepared jet aviator graduate.

The adage that we should train as we fight is fully in evidence at the training command. Joint training is a firm reality as instructors and students, and some commanding officers and executive officers, are now exchanged with the Air Force. In addition to primary pilot training, future Air Force C-130 *Hercules* pilots are winged after training in the multi-engine T-44 or TC-12 turboprop, while the Air Force is instructing future Navy E-6A *Mercury* Take Charge and Move Out mission pilots in the twin-engine T-1A *Jayhawk* trainer. The Air Force is fully integrated into the Naval Flight Officer syllabus, which is providing initial and some advanced training to all USAF navigators. Joint advanced navigation training takes place at Randolph AFB, Texas, in the T-43 flight trainer version of the 737, and Air



T-45A photo by Ted Carlson

Force tactical navigators are joining Navy carrier-based NFOs for advanced training in Pensacola. In addition, Navy personnel also fly Air Force airplanes out of Vance AFB, Okla.

The training aircraft of the future will further this joint doctrine. The Joint Primary Training System (JPATS) T-6A *Texan II* will replace the Navy T-34C and Air Force T-37 *Tweet* trainers with a fully pressurized, ejection-seat-equipped, turbo-prop aircraft capable of speeds in excess of 300 knots. The *Texan II*, with its associated computer-based training and simulator modules, will enhance primary flight and 21st century aviation training curricula.

The future of Naval Aviation will be characterized by the evolution of joint training and ever-changing technology, and the training command will continually adapt to the times. But just as the training command renews the supply of Naval Aviators, NATRACOM itself must also be renewed with fleet experience. When operational aviators bring their experience to the training command, the entire institution of Naval Aviation benefits. Fleet aviators-turned-instructors contribute invaluable real-life lessons that no curriculum can communicate.

The training command is doing more than teaching students how to operate aircraft—it is shaping the future of Naval Aviation. ✈