

## Naval Air Training Command: Creating the Future Every Day

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Every time a part of the Naval Aviation community goes “over the horizon,” it is courtesy of the hard-working individuals in our training command. Every Naval Aviator, Naval Flight Officer (NFO), aircrewman and maintenance professional was initially trained by fleet-experienced members of our great team. These instructors pass on a legacy centered on professional excellence that has made Naval Aviation second to none in every aspect of strike, maritime and helo operations.

Our central role in protecting the nation’s security interests highlights to the world the dangerous choreography of flight operations aboard our most visible sign of sovereign power, the aircraft carrier. But while the carrier is often the most visible part of Naval Aviation, superbly trained members of our team serve as Sailors and Marines on board amphibis or in forward-deployed bases; in helicopter crews embarked in cruisers, destroyers or combat logistics force ships; in maritime patrol crews on deployment to remote parts of the world; or as Coast Guard personnel enforcing our nation’s laws and saving lives. For each of these highly trained men and women, it was the flight instructors and maintenance teams in Pensacola and Whiting Field, Fla.; Corpus Christi and Kingsville, Texas; and Meridian, Miss., who first taught them the meaning of professional excellence.

This issue of *Naval Aviation News* highlights the latest developments within the Naval Air Training Command (NATRACOM). We are

leveraging technology to mold the next generation of Sailors and Marines to go in harm’s way and to prevail. Our training bases and squadrons are being updated with new hardware and software systems to train the next generation of Naval Aviation professionals. The T-45C *Goshawk*’s digital cockpit adds to the T-45 Training System’s state-of-the-art computer-based training programs and high-fidelity flight simulation. And the Joint Primary Aircraft Training System’s (JPATS) T-6A *Texan II* and its ground-based training system will improve efficiency well into the 21st century.

For the textbook definition of “joint,” look no further than the NATRACOM. Our commands have fully integrated pilot and flight officer training programs, as well as some enlisted training programs in order to meet the diverse requirements of the Navy and Air Force. Air Force officers command Navy squadrons and vice versa, and JPATS has been a joint project with the USAF from the beginning.

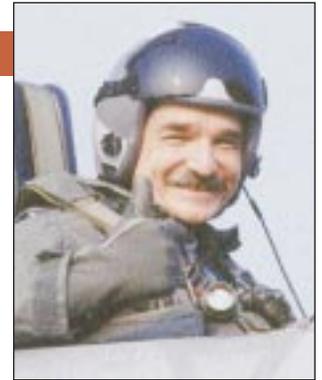
The NATRACOM and fleet replacement squadrons (FRS) have consistently provided the highest quality pilots, NFOs, aircrewman and maintenance personnel to the fleet, but we are constantly looking for ways to improve. Last month, we engaged a consultant group to review our training procedures.; over the next year, we will examine every facet of the process to reduce training time by as much as 40% over the next three years. This will generate predictable steady-state production and provide fleet squadrons with an even higher

quality product. Increased training efficiency will also improve the filling of manpower gaps aboard ship and on shore duty, and eliminate much of the frustration caused by the imbalance of training requirements and resources that impacts retention.

It will always be the people who make the NATRACOM and FRSs so vital. They ARE the fleet. These selfless professionals are doing a difficult job for Naval Aviation every day—in some cases, seven days a week. Unfortunately, many perceive NATRACOM as a less-than-optimum set of orders. This is simply not the case. Last year’s O-5 command selection board screened more officers with NATRACOM instructor duty experience than those without it, and they screened at a higher rate for operational command. The training command is an excellent opportunity to enhance your career. Your flying skills and ability to lead and to teach are superb. Your aviation expertise and judgment are highly valued, and you have a tremendous amount to offer in the fleet when your tour is complete.

Let me leave you with a few thoughts from RAdm. Mike Bucci, Chief of Naval Air Training (see p. 10): “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.”

Thanks, “Smiles,” you said it all.  
**Fly safe. Be the best!!**



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