

FLIGHT JACKET

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El Toro & MCAS Tustin

October 28, 1988

VMFP-3 crash drill smashing success

By Cpl. Sharon Farrell

The fog hovered over the silent runway as the anticipation for the arrival of the RF-4 Phantom grew. Captain Thomas Innocenti, squadron safety officer for Marine Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron-3, checked and re-checked the changing density of the fog. The clock approached 11:30 and still it remained.

"The fog is too dense to allow the RF-4 to circle the runway, we'll have to switch to plan two," explained Innocenti as he received the signal that the RF-4 was within 20 minutes of landing.

This second plan eliminated the involvement of the Launch and Recovery Division. "Initially it was to be their job to rig the arresting gear on the runway prior to the Phantom's emergency landing. However, due to the thickness of the fog the RF-4 would be unable to land on the original designated runway. Instead, it will proceed to land normally and then the drill will begin," stated Innocenti.

Marine Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron 3 was beginning the countdown for its second safety drill of the year. Now, with only ten minutes until arrival, the preparation and plans of the simulated emergency began to materialize.

An anxiously awaiting crash crew and fire department guarded the runway as the RF-4 engaged with the arresting gear. The sound for emergency echoed in the fog and the green P-19A crash crew vehicles quickly began pursuit.

"As soon as the bell sounds I feel a pump of adreniline. I keep thinking of what to do in the worst possible scenario" said Sgt. John Lehmann,



Members of the P-19A Crash Crew rescue an "injured" pilot.

a crash crew member.

Once the Phantom became stationary, robot-like silver suited crew members began their lifesaving procedures. Armed with ladders and hoses, they quickly ascended the aircraft to free its crew, Capt. Ronald Reeves and Capt. John Dace.

With four rescuers atop the aircraft the quest to

evacuate the victims began. "Communication throughout the rescue is vital, especially in a two-man aircraft where you have to determine the condition of both the pilots and cockpit," stated Lehmann.

See DRILL P.13

DoD implements new adoption plan

By Evelyn Doyle Harris
American Forces Information Service

On Sept. 27, Assistant Secretary of Defense (Force Management and Personnel) Grant S. Green Jr., signed DoD Instruction 1341.4. It established policy for implementing a two-year test program for reimbursing adoption expenses.

Under the plan, active duty service members can be reimbursed up to \$2,000 per child or \$5,000 per member in a calendar year. The adoptions must be initiated between Oct. 1, 1987, and Sept. 30, 1989. DoD defines the date of initiation as the date of the initial home-study report or the placement of the child in the military members home for adoption — whichever is later.

For example, if Sgt. Jones and her spouse decide to adopt a foster child they've been caring for in their home, they will be reimbursed if the home-study report is completed by Sept. 30, 1989. On the other hand, if a military couple undergoes a home study by the closing date but the child is not placed until November 1989, costs would not be reimbursed.

The program applies only to families of service members serving on continuous active duty for at least 180 days. DoD officials expect the program to be very popular, based on numerous inquiries they've received since Congress authorized the program in the 1988 Defense Authorization Act this spring.

With the exception of the adoption of stepchildren, the program covers most adoptions of children up to the age of 18 by married couples and single service members. It also covers adoption of children from countries other than the United States and those with special needs.

Most reasonable expenses relating to a legal adoption are reimbursed, unless they have been covered by another government adoption benefits program. "Reasonable expenses" include placement as well as legal and medical fees, including hospital expenses for a newborn infant. Overseas travel fees will be covered if they are necessary to assess the child's health, to qualify for legal adoption or to escort the child to the service member's home.

The services have until the end of 1988 to fully implement the test program, said the Army's adoption point of contact, Bill Hunnicut, of the Army Finance and Accounting Center, Indianapolis. Therefore, he advised members not to be surprised if they are told to wait a few weeks to get registration forms and assistance in applying. The services will announce their implementing instructions through internal information programs and other media. The Army has decided to make finance offices the points of contact for registration forms and program information. Spokesmen for the other services say they are leaning toward making legal assistance offices the points of contact; in the interim, their members should contact those offices.

While they are waiting for their service to implement the program, service members who want to apply for reimbursement should keep careful records of all expenses. They should register for reimbursement as soon as both the home study and placement are complete. Service members should request payment no later than 180 days after the adoption is final, unless that occurred before their service issued implementing instructions. In that case, the limit is 180 days from the service implementation date.

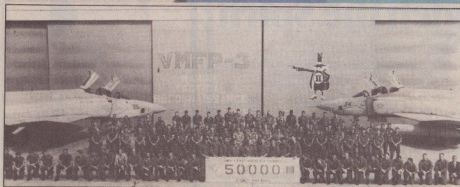


Buddy Hatchet?

Cpl. Kent Fletcher

As Halloween draws near, grotesque individuals welding everything from pitchforks to steak knives are settling into front lawns and driveways. Responsible for this particular work of art are MSgt. Brad Goodin, his wife Wanda, son Aaron and daughter Sasha, living in the staff NCO housing of El Toro.

EYES OF THE CORPS



An ounce of prevention...

By Cpl. Sharon Farrell

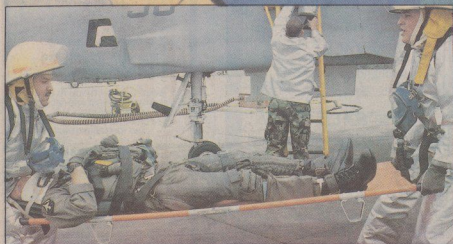
On Oct. 23 Marine Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron 3 became the first Navy Marine Corps Phantom squadron to achieve 50,000 flight hours without having a class "A" mishap. The safe landing of the RF-4 Phantom, the oldest tactical aircraft remaining in the Corps, not only represented the entire squadron's efforts but also celebrated a mishap free seven and one half years for the "Rhinos."

"Fifty thousand mishap free flight hours is only a small milestone, it wasn't a goal we had set. Every day we concentrate on making sure we do everything safely. Today's safe landing is symbolic of everyone's efforts and support," explained LCol Tom Wilson, the Rhinos' commanding officer. The squadron's last mishap occurred on 22 May 1981. "Since that time we have managed to remain

mishap free, even while being stationed about the Midway, which could possibly be considered as one of the most demanding flight environments. This achievement is a reflection of the professionalism and constant communication displayed throughout the squadron," stated LCol. John Pastuf, the Rhinos' executive officer.

For their accomplishment, the reconnaissance squadron received a plaque from the McDonnell Douglas Corporation representing the 50,000 mishap free flight hours. McDonnell Douglas manufactured the RF-4 Phantom.

The Rhinos represent the largest tactical squadron in the Corps. Soon they will also remain as the only active F-4 Phantom squadron. This will occur when the F-4 Phantom squadrons in Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii begin their transitions to F/A-18s.



Speed becomes a life-and-death factor.



MCAS El Toro fireman Jerry Kelso attends to Capt. John Dace.

DRILL...from P.1

Carefully the cervical collars and K.E.D. splints were applied to both victims and the pilots were lowered into awaiting stretchers. From there they were carried to the medics and firefighters who immediately began performing diagnosis and medical procedures.

As the medics finished tending to the victims immediate needs a Search and Rescue helicopter landed. Dace was secured to the stretcher in preparation for his transportation to a medical facility. The rescue part of the drill was now complete.

For the reconnaissance squadron, however, the drill was not over. There still remained the test on how the internal workings of the squadron had operated. "I had specifically designed the program to test the ability of the squadron to pull any necessary records and files. There will also be staged phone calls and messages to ensure that all of the proper procedures are followed after the simulated emergency," stated Innocent.

"The drill was more extensive this time. Before, we didn't have an aircraft airborne or a helo



The P-19A Crash Crew prepares for the worst as the aircraft land.



LCpl. John Horsager (l) and Sgt. John Lehman work in unison.

present. Also it's challenged all areas of our operations," commented Innocent.

Lieutenant Colonel John Pastuf, the squadron executive officer, stated that he was happy with the results of the drill. "We achieved our goals, and through them we'll try to find our shortfalls as far as preparing for mishap flaws."

"Drills and training such as these emphasize a Marine's awareness and understanding for not only the job but also its limitations," concluded Pastuf.



Crash Crew's LCpl. Eric Wolfgang (l) and LCpl. John Horsager carefully remove Capt. Ronald Reeves.



LCpl. John Horsager takes a breather after the mission is complete.