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PILOT RESCUE — Crash crewmen pull a dummy from an aircraft mockup which is engulfed in flames. The crewmen are perfectly safe from the flames; the photo is a double exposure of the fire and the men. (Photo by Cpl. Rich Penland)

They walk into an inferno to save lives
(See pages 6 and 7)

Crew turns crash to rescue in seconds

(Story and photos by Sgt. Guy Smith)

During the month of January, MCAS Crash Crew responded to 18 emergencies, 16 washdowns, ten highpower turnups, two "red labels" and nine medevacs.

The emergencies were mostly aircraft with landing problems; the washdowns, engines turnups and "red labels" (stand by during ammunition transfer) were strictly precautionary safety measures, and the medevacs were services to their injured fellow man.

To many Marines not in the know, the work performed by Crash Crew is fairly routine. Most of the time they serve as an emergency backup in case something goes wrong; most of the time, nothing goes wrong at all. But, when it does, it all comes down at once.

When an aircraft emergency occurs, Crash Crew is in position to reach the pilot and aircraft within seconds. Crash trucks are stationed at the approach end of the runway and the hot spot, a position parallel to the center of the runway. The duty section leader also moves to the hot spot to supervise the operation.

From the time of the crash, it takes only seconds to rescue the pilot. He is pulled from his cockpit under a protective layer of water while the fire still rages. The crash crewmen will extinguish the fire while the pilot is receiving medical treatment.

"Each accident is a different situation and the rescue of the pilot can take place in a few seconds to a couple of minutes, usually within seconds,"

explained GySgt. Conrad Belanger, Crash Crew section leader.

While crashes and emergencies are the most demanding tasks of Crash Crew, some of their lesser tasks are equally important. A carelessly dropped match or burning cigarette can ignite spilt fuel. Crash Crew goes to the fuel spill area and stands by. The fuel is then cleaned up by ground crews or diluted with water by Crash Crew.

When jet engines are checked before and after installation in aircraft, malfunctions can start a fire or cause an explosion. Crash Crew is called upon to stand by as a preventive measure.

The handling of ordnance is a slow and delicate task. Dropped bullets or bombs could start a chain reaction. Crash Crew is again responsible here for safeguarding lives in case of an emergency.

Aircraft aboard the Station are checked by ground crews for hot brakes before shutdown. To prevent the ignition of the approximately two quarts of fuel that is dumped when the aircraft is shutdown, Crash Crew is kept alert. When flightline Marines handle medevacs Crash Crew renders any assistance needed.

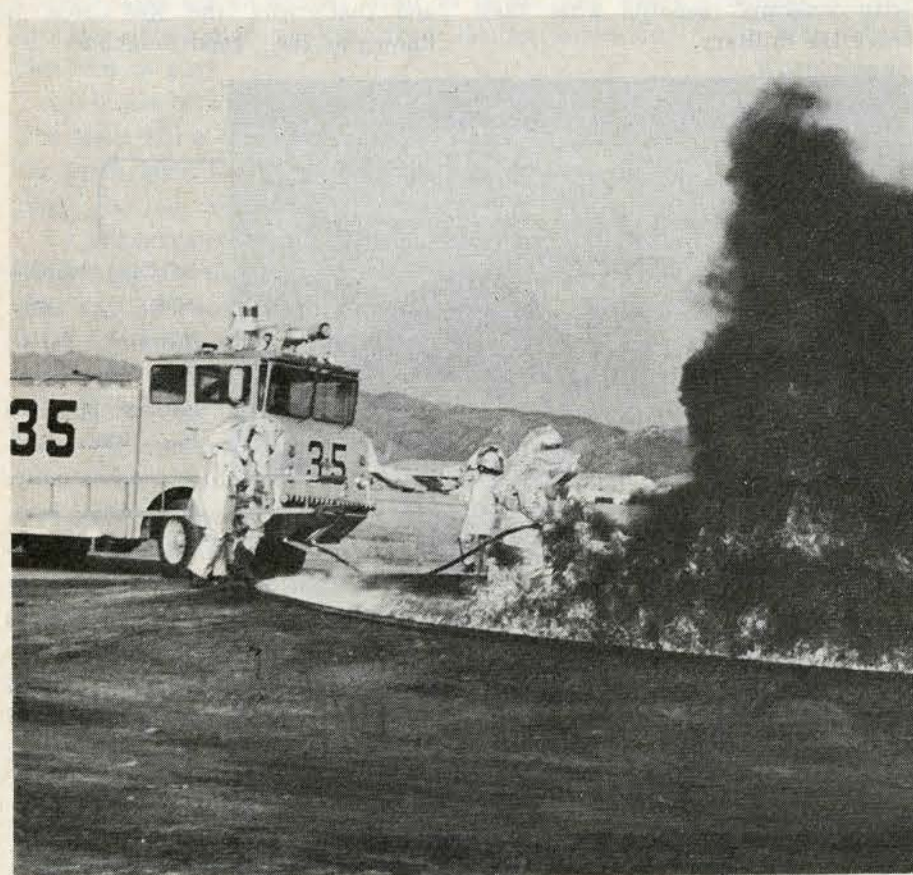
These kind of tasks demand a well trained alert individual with plenty of professional schooling. Crash crewmen spend six weeks of intense training at the Aviation Crash Crew Rescue School in Memphis, Tenn. Countless hours are later spent in studying and practicing to maintain the skills they have learned.



TEN SECONDS AND COUNTING — The ladder crew race against the clock to prevent injury to the pilot.



NIGHT AND DAY — Accidents do happen at night and Crash Crew is able to respond with accuracy. (Photo by MSgt. Dan Wisneski)



LADDER IN — The ladder men enter the fire protected by the hand line men on their way to the cockpit to rescue the pilot.



ONE MORE FOR THE BOOK — LCpl. Sui takes a well deserved rest after fighting a fire.

"Some of the petty stuff we do in classroom study seems like a form of hassling, but it's for our benefit. When the crew responds to an emergency, everyone has a job to do and we can count on each other doing his job right," emphasized Cpl. Eugene Ocasio, crash crewman.

Training fires are a major part of the practical application sessions the men use to sharpen the edge on their skills. Fighting a fire in open ground is full of risk. A sudden change in wind direction and the men could be engulfed in flames. The protective suit worn by the crewmen will burn. It's used as a flame and heat reflector and crewmen can only spend a few moments in extreme heat before it affects them.

During training fires the men rescue a dummy from a mockup of an aircraft cockpit, following set procedures to ensure the safety of the pilot and the rescue men. The men learn defensive control of the fire to prevent sudden flame-ups from occurring.

"We emphasize safety and show the men tricks of the trade they don't teach in school. Any mistakes they may have made during the training fires are corrected on the spot. The men are professionals and are eager to learn all they can," stressed GySgt. Bob Willis, training staff NCO for Crash Crew. "We also try to prevent aircraft accidents before they can occur," he added.

A wheels up landing means expensive damage to aircraft and Crash Crew has the responsibility to ensure this doesn't happen, the gunny explained. A

wheels watch is posted at the approach end of the runway and maintains a constant vigil. The watch stander is armed with binoculars and flares. He signals the pilot if the landing gear is not locked into position for a safe landing. The watch is relieved every two hours to keep the duty man alert and to prevent optical illusions caused by staring into the sky for long periods.

If the landing gear collapses upon touchdown, the aircraft will bounce and slide down the runway. The hot spot crew is the first to respond and within seconds the pilot will be safely removed from the aircraft, if he has not ejected. The pilot may eject, because he has no control over the aircraft and it usually burns.

The hot spot is manned by a crew of four or five men, depending on the truck used. The MB5 carries four men and has one turret gun. It carries a load of 400 gallons of water. The MB1 has two turret guns and 1000 gallons of water and carries five men. The crew is relieved every four hours. During good weather a hot spot crewman will sit in the hatchway of the turret gun, which allows 360 degrees of visibility. Inclement weather finds the lookout in the enclosure of the cab with only 180 degrees of visibility.

"Men and machine must work as one. When a man's life is at stake, there can be no room for error. The crash crewmen strive for perfection," commented GySgt. George Trotter, Crash Chief.

Perfection is missed slightly in an imperfect world. That doesn't stop the men of Crash Crew from trying!

Air Station champs claim another victory

Story and Photo by
Sgt. Ken Barnes

Ball control was the name of the game the evening of March 15, when the Station intramural basketball champions zipped past the Iwakuni City All-Stars, 53-36, in the first game played in the Mitsui Memorial Stadium near Iwakuni.

The "bring it down, set it up" style of offense played by the H&MS-12 Group Supply team carried them to victory, as they generally outshot and out rebounded the Japanese team.

Although the entire team turned in a balanced performance, forward Napoleon "Hollywood" Rogers led the team in scoring with 16 points and in overall defense.

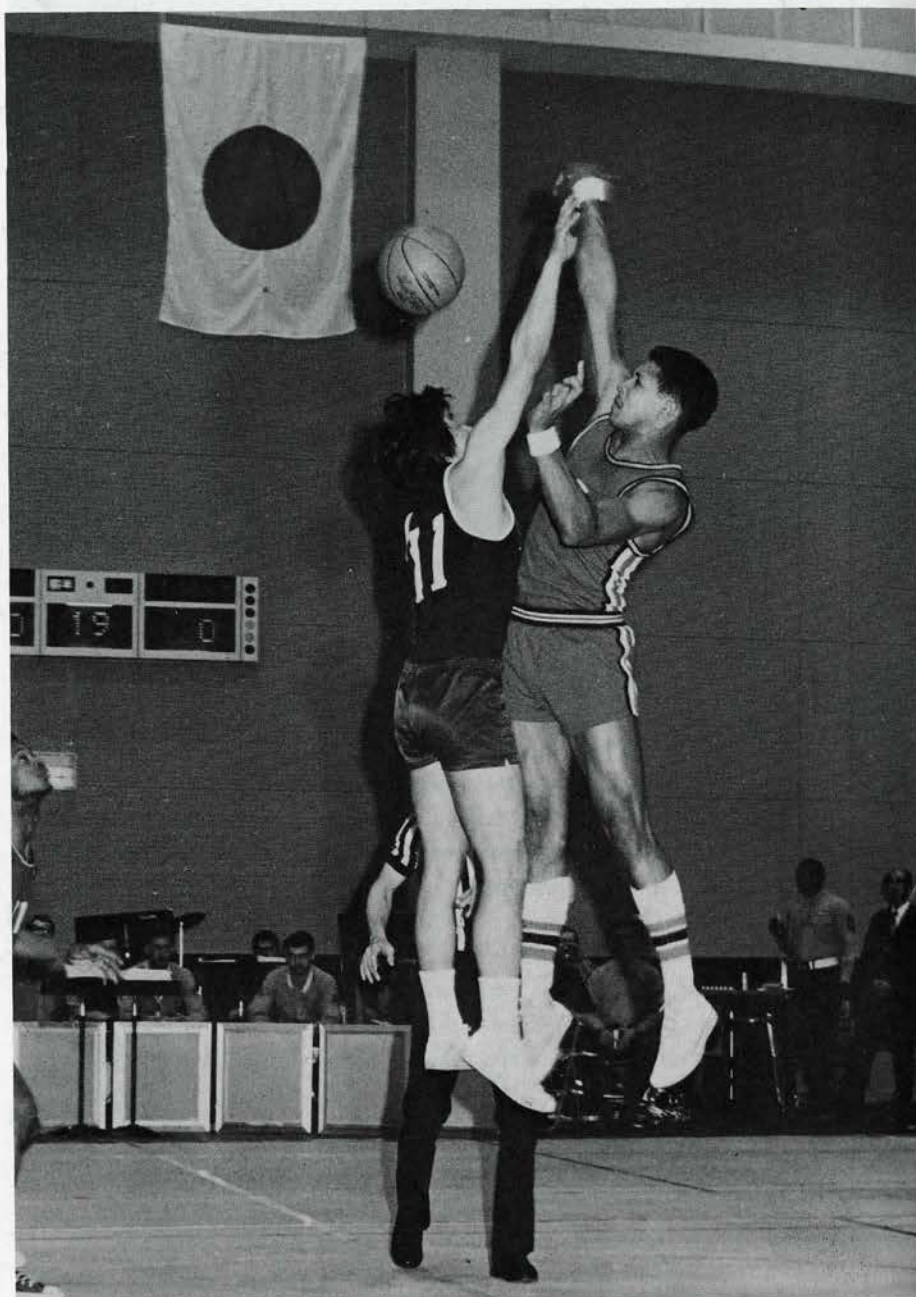
The Japanese team managed to score first, even though the Supply team controlled the opening tip-off. For the first 10 minutes of the game neither team was able to score well and, with nine minutes left in the half, the score was 8-7 in favor of Supply. One minute later Rogers broke the deadlock and went on to give his team an eight-point lead.

The Supply defense managed to hold the Japanese team scoreless for the next four minutes by the efforts of guard Larry Hebb and forwards Howard Brantley and Brandon Seale. Both men intercepted several All-Star passes and took the ball down court to set up scoring plays. The team ran the score to 19-11 with four minutes left and finished the half with a 25-13 lead.

The Japanese team also opened the second half scoring, but their game failed to improve. Supply maintained a consistent six-to-10-point lead throughout the half.

Rogers continued his game leading efforts in the second half and sunk four more to add up to a total of eight buckets by driving the base line and going over his defender from the corners.

Both Rogers and Brantley dominated the defensive boards in the second half and Brantley contributed 13 points to the team's total. Earl Williams, who hit for



THE TIP — Forward "Hollywood" Rogers taps the opening tip-off to forward Howard Brantley (11) in H&MS-12 Supply's victory over the the Iwakuni All-Stars, March 15.

four points in the first period, dumped in six points in the second to finish the game with 10 points.

The team's defensive performance in the second half was excellent. All of the players continued to block the lanes, intercept passes, and hold the All-Stars scoreless for a full eight minutes in the half.

Supply's victory over the Iwakuni All-Stars can be attributed to their play as a team and their skill. They beat the hard, aggressive style of the individual Japanese by physically blocking them on defense and going to the open man on offense.