



COMMANDER NAVAL SURFACE FORCE
UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
NAVAL AMPHIBIOUS BASE, CORONADO
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92155

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

FF4-3/16:rer
5830
Ser 16- C813

22 SEP 1977

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~--Unclassified upon removal of enclosures (5), (6), (7),
(9), (11) and (12)

THIRD ENDORSEMENT on CDR " *BL* , USN, *BL* 5/1110
investigative report of 6 Aug 1977

From: Commander Naval Surface Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet
To: Judge Advocate General

Subj: Investigation to inquire into the circumstances connected with
the helicopter crash which occurred at sea on 11 March 1977,
USS STERETT (CG 31)

1. Forwarded.
2. Recommendation 1(a) is not concurred in.

BS

3. The requirement to schedule and achieve unit qualifications prior to POM is to be included in a forthcoming joint COMNAVSURFPAC/COMNAVAIRPAC ship/helicopter detachment training and qualification instruction.

4. Subject to the foregoing, the proceedings, findings of fact, opinions and recommendations of the investigating officer, as modified by the second endorsement, are approved.

Bl

Deputy

Copy to:
CINCPACFLT
COMNAVAIRPAC
COMASWINGPAC
COMCRUDESGRU ONE
CO HSL 33
CO USS STERETT (CG 31)

(776933)



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BOUND 549-77



COMMANDER CRUISER-DESTROYER GROUP ONE
FPO SAN FRANCISCO, 96601

CCDG-1:11:cmm
5800
Ser C34
30 AUG 1977

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ - Unclassified upon removal of enclosures
(5), (6), (7), (9), (11) and (12).

SECOND ENDORSEMENT on CDR B6 USN, B6 /1110
ltr of 6 August 1977

From: Commander Cruiser-Destroyer Group ONE
To: Judge Advocate General
Via: Commander Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet
Subj: Investigation to inquire into the circumstances
connected with the helicopter crash which occurred
at sea on 11 March 1977

1. Forwarded.
2. The delay in forwarding this investigation and the reason
therefore as stated in the preliminary statement is noted.
3.
rec

B5

4. Subject to the foregoing the proceedings, findings of
fact, opinions and recommendations are approved.

B4

Copy to:
CINCPACFLT
COMNAVAIRPAC
COMASWINGPAC
CO, HSL 33
CO, USS STERETT (CG 31)



USS STERETT (CG-31)
FPO SAN FRANCISCO 96601

CG31/CGF:ck
5800
7 August 1977
Ser C15

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ (Unclssified upon removal of enclosures 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12).

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on Commander *B6*, USN, *B6* 1110
ltr of 6 August 1977

From: Commanding Officer, USS STERETT (CG-31):
To: Judge Advocate General
Via: (1) Commander Cruiser-Destroyer Group ONE
(2) Commander Naval Surface Force U. S. Pacific Fleet

Subj: Investigation to inquire into the circumstances connected with the
helicopter crash which occurred at sea on 11 March 1977

1. Forwarded, concurring with the findings of fact, opinions and recommendations
expressed in the basic correspondence.

B6

Copy to:
CINCPACFLT
COMNAVAIRPAC
COMASWINGPAC
HSL-33
CDR H. L. MORRISON

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

6 August 1977

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ (Unclassified upon removal of enclosures 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12)

From: Commander *B4* USN, *B4* /1110
 To: Judge Advocate General
 Via: (1) Commanding Officer, USS STERETT (CG-31)
 (2) Commander Cruiser-Destroyer Group ONE
 (3) Commander Naval Surface Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet

Subj: Investigation to inquire into the circumstances connected with the helicopter crash which occurred at sea on 11 March 1977

Ref: (a) JAG Manual
 (b) CO USS STERETT (CG-31) ltr CG31/HLM:ta 5800 of 16 March 1977
 (c) COMCRUDESFORSEVENTHFLT ltr CTF 75:11:cmm 5800 Ser 14 of 19 March 1977
 (d) COMASWINGPAC ltr FF7-11/011:PMG:at 5800 Ser 393 of 29 March 1977

Encl: (1) Copy of Commander *B4* USN, ltr of 25 May 1977 with COMASWINGPAC first endorsement FF7-11/011:PMG:at 5800 Ser G-41 of 28 June 1977
 (2) Appointing order, CO USS STERETT (CG-31) ltr CG31/HLM:ta 5800 of 16 March 1977
 (3) Appointing order, COMCRUDESFORSEVENTHFLT ltr CTF 75:11:cmm 5800 Ser 14 of 19 March 1977
 (4) Appointing order, COMASWINGPAC ltr FF7-11/011:PMG:at 5800 Ser 393 of 29 March 1977
 (5)
 (6) *B1*
 (7)
 (8) USS STERETT 112116Z MAR 77
 (9)
 (10) USS STERETT *B1* 120652Z MAR 77
 (11)
 (12) *B1*
 (13) Extract from USS STERETT (CG-31) Deck Log, 11 March 1977 enroute from Pearl Harbor, Hawaii to Yokosuka, Japan
 (14) Extract from USS STERETT (CG-31) Weather Log for 11 March 1977
 (15) Copy of Air Department Eight O'clock Report submitted by LCDR SMITH on 11 March 1977
 (16) Unsworn statement of LT USN
 (17) Unsworn statement of AW3 USN
 (18) Unsworn statement of LCDR *B4* USN
 (19) Unsworn statement of LTJG USN
 (20) Unsworn statement of LTJG USNR
 (21) Unsworn statement of LTJG 1 *B4* USN
 (22) Unsworn statement of AD1 USN
 (23) Unsworn statement of LTJG USN
 (24) Unsworn statement of BM3 USN
 (25) Unsworn statement of LT USN
 (26) Copy of undated listing of HSL-31 Det-1 pilot qualification and requirements while assigned to the Seventh Fleet, presented to the Executive Officer by LCDR SMITH on 8 or 9 March 1977

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ (Unclassified upon removal of enclosure (, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12)

- (27) Copy of excerpts from the Medical record of LT Bk
- (28) Copy of excerpts from the Medical record of AW3 L
- (29) COMASWINGPAC 230032Z APR 77
- (30) COMNAVAIRPAC 300149Z APR 77
- (31) COMASWINGPAC 062117Z JUN 77

Preliminary Statement

In accordance with reference (a), I have conducted an investigation into the circumstances connected with the Helicopter, Anti-Submarine Squadron Thirty-Three (HSL-33) helicopter (Bureau number 150142) crash which occurred at sea and resulted in the death of LCDR Jeffery Forrest SMITH, USN, /1310. Commander USN, assisted in the investigation as directed by reference (b). All provisions of the appointing order have been carried out. There were no difficulties experienced in the provision of witness, or the obtaining of statements. This report was delayed in submission to permit receipt and inclusion of data of the parallel investigation directed by Commander, Anti-Submarine Warfare Wing, U. S. Pacific Fleet in reference (d), and which is included in this report as enclosure (1). All witnesses were advised in compliance with the provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974 (Public Law 93-579) and were warned in accordance with Article 31, UCMJ. Persons other than those whose statements appear as enclosures hereto were questioned as to their knowledge of the circumstances being investigated, but could not contribute more than confirmation of the information contained elsewhere, or had no direct knowledge of the circumstances. The time of the crash has been stated at 2357 or 2358 in different references. The ship's deck log establishes the time of the crash as 2357 (L). There is also a difference in statements as to whether the helicopter was on its third or fourth approach when the crash occurred. One approach was waved off early by the pilot and did not cross the ship, and was not considered by most shipboard observers as an approach. Neither of these minor discrepancies has any significance in the outcome of this investigation. The investigative report submitted by Commander , USN, as directed by reference (d) was received on 26 July 1977 and includes the circumstances related to the selection, assignment, and preparatory training of personnel to Detachment ONE as well as individual pilot qualifications, currency, and flight experience. The information in that report is not repeated in the body of this report, but rather is included as enclosure (1).

FINDINGS OF FACT

- (1) That on 11 March 1977, at about 2357 (L), USS STERETT (CG-31) was at sea enroute from Pearl Harbor, Hawaii to Yokosuka, Japan and was at position 28°-55' north, 163°-14' east. (Enclosures 7, 8, 9, 11, 13)
- (2) That at Eight O'clock reports LCDR SMITH reported that the helicopter was in a fully up status with full systems capability. (Enclosure 15)
- (3) That pre-exercise briefings were conducted prior to the flight and included the mission, tactics, communications, EMCON, flight profiles and flight crew responsibilities. No emergency procedures were briefed with the crewman. (Enclosures 16, 17, 18, 21)

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(4) That at 2215 (L), flight quarters had been set in preparation for launching HSL-33 (Detachment 1) SH-2F helicopter for reconnaissance against two French ships, FS JEANNE D ARC and FS FORBIN, during a scheduled surface encounter. (Enclosures 13, 18, 20)

(5) That the following personnel comprised the flight crew in the helicopter for the surface encounter mission: LCDR Jeffery Forrest SMITH, USN, : *B6* pilot; LT *B6* , USN, *B6* co-pilot; AW3 *B6* , USN, crewman. (Enclosures 6, 11, 16, 17)

(6) That at 2247 (L), the helicopter was launched under shipboard electronic silence to search for, and report the position of the French ships. (Enclosures 13, 16, 18, 19)

(7) That the helicopter was operating normally throughout the flight with the exception of illuminated number two generator light which would not reset. (Enclosures 16,17)

(8) That "OPS NORMAL" reports were received from the helicopter by radio transmission in CIC at 2251 (L) and 2300 (L). (Enclosures 6, 18)

(9) That LCDR SMITH, the pilot in command, had difficulty maintaining airspeed and altitude during the flight. (Enclosures 16, 17)

(10) That at 2320 (L) a radio transmission was received in CIC from the helicopter that it was returning to the ship. (Enclosures 6, 18)

(11) That at approximately 2320 (L), the flight quarters detail, which was standing at ease on station, was told to remain all flight quarters stations, and that within a couple of minutes, the Officer of the Deck was informed by the Landing Signal Officer that the flight quarters detail was manned and ready. (Enclosures 18, 19, 20)

(12) That at 2320 (L), USS STERETT was on course 270° T at 9 knots with the relative wind 50° to port at 14 knots. (Enclosures 11, 13)

(13) That at 2320 (L), in sea state 3 seas, cloud coverage was 100 percent, ceiling 1000-1500 feet lowering in rain showers, temperature was 70 degrees F, dew point was 62 degrees F, visibility was 4-7 miles, decreasing in rain showers. (Enclosures 11,14)

(14) That at 2329 (L), USS STERETT changed course to 275° and at 2344 (L), changed course again to 280° to minimize the rolling of the ship. (Enclosures 13, 19)

(15) That the night was very dark and there was little or no visible horizon. (Enclosures 20, 21, 22)

(16) That the co-pilot, LT : *B6* who was not night shipboard landing qualified, was to maintain instrument scan during approaches. (Enclosures 1, 16, 26)

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- (17) That at 2357 (L) while the helicopter was making its approach to the ship from the starboard quarter, it dipped into the water momentarily at about 800-1000 yards from the ship, climbed out of the water and then pitched into the sea and sank. (Enclosures 5, 6, 19, 20, 21, 22)
- (18) That, as the helicopter touched the water and rose up, LCDR SMITH reported on his radio "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday, going in lost electrics" or words to that effect. (Enclosures 6, 16)
- (19) That immediately upon seeing the helicopter crash, the ship turned to close the crash site and made preparations to lower the motor whale boat. (Enclosures 13, 18, 19, 21)
- (20) That as USS STERETT stopped at the site, strobe lights were seen, and the whale boat was lowered into the water. (Enclosures 19, 21)
- (21) That the motor whale boat crew could not see the strobe lights and the coxswain was directed to the location of the survivors by personnel on deck. (Enclosures 21, 23, 24)
- (22) That the co-pilot LT _____ and crewman AW3 _____ were picked up by the crew in the motor whale boat. (Enclosures 16, 17, 19, 23, 24)
- (23) That LT _____ and AW3 _____ while in the water tried to locate and call LCDR SMITH and received no response. (Enclosures 16, 17)
- (24) That the coxswain was directed to various locations in the vicinity of the ship where on deck observers thought they might have seen LCDR SMITH, but was unable to locate him. (Enclosures 13, 19, 21, 23, 24)
- (25) That the coxswain was ordered to return to the ship to be recovered so that LT _____ and AW3 _____ could receive medical attention. (Enclosures 19, 21, 23, 24)
- (26) That after recovery of the motor whale boat, USS STERETT proceeded back to the crash site and conducted an area search throughout the night to try to locate LCDR SMITH without success. (Enclosures 13, 18, 19)
- (27) That during the approaches to the ship, the helicopter was operating normally as observed by personnel on deck and that navigation and anti-collision lights were on and landing gear was down. (Enclosures 19, 22, 23)
- (28) That on the final approach of the ship, it started to rain lightly and the ship was engulfed in a heavy rain shortly after the crash. (Enclosures 9, 19, 21, 22)
- (29) That LCDR SMITH had not flown a night flight for over 90 days and was not qualified or current in night small deck landings. He had submitted a memo, however on 8 or 9 March indicating that he was so qualified. (Enclosures 1, 26)

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(30) That LCDR SMITH did not declare an emergency or otherwise ask for any assistance from USS STERETT until the Mayday call. (Enclosures 11, 16, 17, 18, 21)

(31) That LT _____ was examined by STERETT's assigned Corpsman upon return to the ship and had the following identified injuries: 2 minor scratches on _____, cleansed with hydrogen peroxide. (Enclosure 27)

(32) That LT _____ received a physical examination on board USS MIDWAY (CVA-41) on 15 March 1977 with the following injuries noted: minor abrasion of _____, left side of _____ and _____ all healing. (Enclosure 27)

(33) That AW3 _____ was examined by STERETT's assigned Corpsman upon return to the ship and the following identified injuries: minor laceration to _____ and _____, treated accordingly; 1" laceration to _____, sutured with 4 4-0 nylon sutures under 3cc 2% lidocain. (Enclosure 28)

(34) That AW3 _____ received a physical examination onboard USS MIDWAY (CVA-41) on 15 March 1977, with the following injuries noted: contusion, _____ and 1 _____ area; contusion, _____ (Enclosure 28)

(35) That LCDR Jeffery Forrest SMITH, was drowned and lost at sea in the helicopter crash and his remains were neither sighted nor recovered. (Enclosures 8, 9, 16, 17, 18)

(36) That LCDR SMITH experienced seasickness at sea during rough weather. (Enclosures 21, 25)

(37) That LCDR SMITH was concerned about his recent B-6 (Enclosures 21, 25)

(38) That the following government property was lost as a result of the crash and sinking of the SH-2F helicopter, Bureau number 150142: (a) Those items listed in enclosure (7), TACAID 26 and gyrostabilized binoculars. (Enclosures 7, 12)

(39) That the urgent change recommendation to the NATOPS Manual requires a day shipboard landing prior to a night landing if no night landing has been conducted within the last seven days (Enclosures 29, 30)

(40) That a monthly Lamps/Vertrep pilot proficiency report for helicopter detachments has been established. (Enclosure 31)

OPINION

(1) That the helicopter was in good mechanical flying condition when it was launched, and that the indication of loss of number two generator removed redundancy of an electrical power source in the helicopter. (Finding of fact: 2, 7, 8,)

(2) That adequate briefings were held between the helicopter pilots and STERETT personnel, with the exception of emergency procedures brief with the crewman, to ensure full understanding of the surface encounter mission,

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tactics to be employed, communications procedures, helicopter crew responsibilities, safety of flight and helicopter recovery upon completion of the mission. (Findings of fact: 3)

(3) That flight quarters was adequately manned and that flight deck lighting and the SGSI were operating properly. (Findings of fact: 4, 11)

(4) That adequate one way radio communications were established from the helicopter to STERETT and STERETT did not transmit to the helicopter due to EMCON established for the exercise. (Findings of fact: 8, 10, 18)

(5)

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(Findings of fact: 37)

(6)

(Findings of fact: 36)

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(7) That the primary cause of the helicopter crash was pilot error due to the lack of proficiency in night landings of LCDR SMITH and LT HACKETT. (Findings of fact: 16, 29)

(8) That had LCDR SMITH notified STERETT that he was experiencing difficulty in landing, the LSO or ASAC in CIC may have been able to assist in the landing by providing visual and radar cues or executing low visibility approach procedures, and this failure contributed to the accident. (Findings of fact: 30)

(9) That the accident may have been prevented had the co-pilot LT ~~a~~ ^{B6} maintained an instrument scan. (Findings of fact: 16)

(10) That the lack of visual horizon contributed to the accident. (Findings of fact: 15)

(11) That the increased requirements for pilot qualification/currency recommended in enclosure (29) and implemented by enclosure (30), are adequate to minimize the possibility of helicopter accidents due to pilot proficiency. (Findings of fact: 39)

(12) That the pilot proficiency report implemented by enclosure (31) provides a satisfactory vehicle by which pilot proficiency may be monitored by the parent squadron and higher authority. (Findings of fact: 40)

(13) That the death of LCDR SMITH, and the injuries to LT ^{B6} and AW3 ^{B6} occurred in the line of duty were not a result of their own misconduct. (Findings of fact: 5)

(14) That the injuries to LT ^{B6} and AW3 ^{B6} in the accident should not result in any permanent disability. (Findings of fact: 31, 32, 33, 34)

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(15) That LCDR SMITH, as the Officer in Charge of HSL-33 Det ONE, must be held responsible for the accident due to his negligence in ensuring that the flight crew was properly trained and qualified to accomplish the assigned mission. (Findings of fact: 6, 12, 17, 56, and 60 of enclosure 1)

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In addition to the recommendations enumerated in the investigation conducted by Commander *B6*, USN, as modified by Commander Anti-Submarine Warfare Wing, U. S. Pacific Fleet (enclosure 1), it is recommended that:

(a)

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(b) At the first opportunity upon commencement of the deployment, each pilot conduct day/night familiarization landings with each different class of ship, having single spot landing capabilities, which they would expect to operate with during the deployment.

2. It is recommended that no disciplinary action be taken against LT

B6

B6

Copy to:
CINCPACFLT
COMNAVAIRPAC
COMASWINGPAC
HSL-33

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COMMANDER NAVAL AIR FORCE
 UNITED STATES PACIFIC FLEET
 NAVAL AIR STATION, NORTH ISLAND
 SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92135

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

5800

Ser 011/ C266

JUL 22 1977

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~--Unclassified upon removal of enclosures (3) & (72)

SECOND ENDORSEMENT on CDR J. M. PEARIGEN, USN, investigative report of 25 May 77

From: Commander Naval Air Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet
 To: Judge Advocate General

Subj: Investigation to inquire into the circumstances connected with the aircraft mishap of 11 March 1977 involving aircraft SH-2F BUNO 150142, embarked in USS STERETT with HSL 33, DET ONE, which resulted in the death of LCDR Jeffrey F. SMITH, USN

1. Forwarded.
2. The actions being taken by the Second Endorser to ensure full Detachment qualification and proficiency prior to future deployments are approved. However, it is noted that had the existing checklist contained in reference (b) been properly followed, the lack of pilot qualifications would have been readily discovered. Pre-deployment evaluations and other inspections are only useful when thoroughly and conscientiously conducted.
3. Subject to the foregoing, the proceedings, findings of fact, opinions and recommendations of the investigating officer and the action of the convening authority thereon are approved.

Copy to:
 COMASWINGPAC



R. F. Coogan
 R. F. COOGAN
 Vice Admiral, U.S. Navy

BUNO
 2140
 3931-77

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 CONFIDENTIAL



COMMANDER
ANTI-SUBMARINE WARFARE WING
U.S. PACIFIC FLEET
NAVAL AIR STATION, NORTH ISLAND
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92135

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ (unclassified upon removal of enclosures (3) and (72)).

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

FF7-11/011:PMG:at
5800
Ser: C-41
28 June 1977

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on CDR Jare M. PEARIGEN, USN, ltr of 25 May 1977

From: Commander Anti-Submarine Warfare Wing, U. S. Pacific Fleet
To: Judge Advocate General
Via: Commander Naval Air Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet

Subj: Investigation to inquire into the circumstances connected with the aircraft mishap of 11 March 1977 involving aircraft SH-2F BUNO 150142, embarked in USS STERETT with HSL-33, DET ONE, which resulted in the death of LCDR Jeffrey F. SMITH, U. S. Navy

Ref: (c) Telcon between CDR HILDER (COMASWINGPAC) and CDR BARTON (OP591) of 17 June 1977

Encl: (91) COMASWINGPAC msg 312057Z Mar 1977
(92) Attachment 1, COMASWINGPACINST 3710.17
(93) COMNAVAIRPAC msg 262215Z May 1977

1. Readdressed and forwarded.
2. The Preliminary Statement and Findings of Fact are approved.
3. The Opinions are approved with the following exceptions:

a. Opinion 14 is disapproved. The fact that NATOPS Evaluations performed in another command were accepted as fulfilling the requirements for designation as an H2P or HAC is not in conflict with OPNAVINST 3710.7H. Liaison with OPNAV (OP-591), reference (c), verifies that the intent of OPNAVINST 3710.7H is that the pilots must possess a current NATOPS qualification. There is no requirement to renew a current NATOPS qualification for the specific purpose of advancement to H2P or HAC. It is also intended that a NATOPS evaluation accomplished in one command be valid in any other squadron.

4. The recommendations are approved with the following comments and exceptions:

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25 May 1977

From: Commander Jare M. ^{B6} USN
To: Commander Anti-Submarine Warfare Wing, U.S. Pacific Fleet

Subj: Investigation to inquire into the circumstances connected with the aircraft mishap of 11 March 1977 involving aircraft SH-2F BUNO 150142, embarked in USS STERETT with HSL-33, Det ONE, which resulted in the death of LCDR Jeffrey F. SMITH, U.S. Navy.

Ref: (a) JAG Manual
(b) COMASWINGPAC Instruction C3500.16C

Encl: (1) COMASWINGPAC ltr ser 393 of 29 March 1977
(2) COMASWINGPAC message 301549Z March 1977
(3) ^{B1}
(4) Statement of LCDR ^{B6} ^{B6}, USN, COMASWINGPAC HSL Readiness and Training Officer
(5) Detachment ONE monthly summary for the month of February 1977
(6) Statement of LCDR ^{B6} ^{B6}, USN, HSL-33 Operations Officer
(7) Statement of LCDR ^{B6} ^{B6}, USN, HSL-33 Assistant Maintenance and Detachment Liason Officer
(8) Pre-Deployment Checkout Requirements for HSL-33 Det ONE (HSL-33 Inst 3700.1A)
(9) Statement of CDR ^{B6} ^{B6}, USN, HSL-33 Commanding Officer
(10) Statement of LT ^{B6} ^{B6}, USN, HSL-33 Det ONE Maintenance Officer
(11) CO, HSL-33 ltr, code 1321 of 21 December 1976
(12) BUPERS Order no. 099111 dated 20 June 1974 to LCDR Jeffrey F. SMITH, USN
(13) HSL-33 Detachment ONE message 210104 dated May 1977
(14) Transcripts of pages from aviator's flight log book of LCDR Jeffrey F. SMITH, USN
(15) CO, HSL-33 ltr, code 1500 of 12 August 1975
(16) NATOPS Evaluation Report on LCDR Jeffrey F. SMITH, USN, dated 01 September 1976
(17) Post Maintenance Functional Check Pilot Designation for LCDR Jeffrey F. SMITH, USN
(18) CO, HSL-33 ltr, code 3740 of 21 November 1975
(19) NATOPS Instrument Rating for LCDR Jeffrey F. SMITH, USN
(20) BUPERS Order no 140460Z dated 20 November 1975 to LT ^{B6} ^{B6}, USN
(21) CO, HSL-33 ltr, code 1500 of 15 February 1977
(22) NATOPS Instrument Rating for LT ^{B6} ^{B6}, USN
(23) Post Maintenance Functional Check Pilot Designation for LT ^{B6} ^{B6}, USN
(24) transcripts of pages from aviator's flight log book of LT ^{B6} ^{B6}, USN
(25) BUPERS Order no. 075689 dated 01 March 1974 to LT ^{B6} ^{B6}, U.S. Navy
(26) CO, HSL-33 ltr, code 1500 of 16 November 1976
(27) NATOPS Evaluation Report on LT ^{B6} ^{B6}, USN, dated 10 February 1977

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COMMANDER
ANTI-SUBMARINE WARFARE WING
U.S. PACIFIC FLEET
NAVAL AIR STATION, NORTH ISLAND
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92135

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PF7-11/011:PMG:at
5800
Ser: C-41
28 June 1977

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on CDR *BP*, USN, ltr of 25 May 1977

From: Commander Anti-Submarine Warfare Wing, U. S. Pacific Fleet
To: Judge Advocate General
Via: Commander Naval Air Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet

Subj: Investigation to inquire into the circumstances connected with the aircraft mishap of 11 March 1977 involving aircraft SH-2F BUNO 150142, embarked in USS STERETT with HSL-33, DET ONE, which resulted in the death of LCDR Jeffrey P. SMITH, U. S. Navy

Ref: (c) Telcon between CDR *Bo* (COMASWINGPAC) and CDR *Bo* (OP591) of 17 June 1977

Encl: (91) COMASWINGPAC msg 312057Z Mar 1977
(92) Attachment 1, COMASWINGPACINST 3710.17
(93) COMNAVAIRPAC msg 262215Z May 1977

1. Readdressed and forwarded.
2. The Preliminary Statement and Findings of Fact are approved.
3. The Opinions are approved with the following exceptions:
 - (a.) Opinion 14 is disapproved.

BS

4. The recommendations are approved with the following comments and exceptions:

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a. Recommendations 1 and 2 are amended as follows: Hearings in accordance with Article 15, UCMJ, will be held to determine the extent, if any, of dereliction of duty on the part of Commander Mosser and Lieutenant Commander Mahoney in conjunction with this accident. Commander Naval Air Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet, will be notified of the results of the hearings. ⁵

b. Recommendation 3 is disapproved.

BS/B6

c. Direction to implement Recommendations 4, 5, 6, 9, 10 and 12 has been forwarded by separate letter to Commanding Officer, Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron Light THIRTY-THREE, for action.

d. Recommendation 7: As set forth in enclosure (91) this Command has requested that Commander Third Fleet schedule six hours per week (three day and three night) of small deck ship time for helicopter CQ and HIFR. Third and fourth quarter Fiscal Year 1977 schedules reflect this requirement, and currently all necessary helicopter pilot qualifications are being accomplished. In addition, minimum pre-deployment pilot proficiency standards have been addressed in Attachment 1 to COMASWINGPACINST 3710.17 of 9 June 1977, enclosure (92). These requirements are considerably more stringent than those in the SH-2F NATOPS and will ensure full qualification and proficiency prior to future detachments. This subject will also be covered in detail in a joint COMNAVAIRPAC/COMNAVSURFPAC instruction currently being written on the subject of "Helicopter Detachment Training, Workup and Proficiency Standards," as indicated by enclosure (93).

e. Recommendation 8: Upon completion of the joint instruction, COMASWINGPACINST C3500.16 will be revised to ensure that all Detachment Readiness Evaluations will be conducted no later than 30 days prior to deployment, will include review of pilot logbooks, and will conclude with a written report.

f. Recommendation 11 is disapproved,

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

25 May 1977

- From: Commander Jare M. ^{B6} USN
To: Commander Anti-Submarine Warfare Wing, U.S. Pacific Fleet
- Subj: Investigation to inquire into the circumstances connected with the aircraft mishap of 11 March 1977 involving aircraft SH-2F BUNO 150142, embarked in USS STERETT with HSL-33, Det ONE, which resulted in the death of LCDR Jeffrey F. SMITH, U.S. Navy.
- Ref: (a) JAG Manual
(b) COMASWINGPAC Instruction C3500.16C
- Encl: (1) COMASWINGPAC ltr ser 393 of 29 March 1977
(2) COMASWINGPAC message 301549Z March 1977
(c) (3) ^{B1}
(4) Statement of LCDR ^{B6} ^{B6} USN, COMASWINGPAC HSL Readiness and Training Officer
(5) Detachment ONE monthly summary for the month of February 1977
(6) Statement of LCDR ^{B6} USN, HSL-33 Operations Officer
(7) Statement of LCDR ^{B6} USN, HSL-33 Assistant Maintenance and Detachment Liason Officer
(8) Pre-Deployment Checkout Requirements for HSL-33 Det ONE (HSL-33 Inst 3700.1A)
(9) Statement of CDR ^{B6} USN, HSL-33 Commanding Officer
(10) Statement of LT ^{B6} USN, HSL-33 Det ONE Maintenance Officer
(11) CO, HSL-33 ltr, code 1321 of 21 December 1976
(12) BUPERS Order no. 099111 dated 20 June 1974 to LCDR Jeffrey F. SMITH, USN
(13) HSL-33 Detachment ONE message 210104 dated May 1977
(14) Transcripts of pages from aviator's flight log book of LCDR Jeffrey F. SMITH, USN
(15) CO, HSL-33 ltr, code 1500 of 12 August 1975
(16) NATOPS Evaluation Report on LCDR Jeffrey F. SMITH, USN, dated 01 September 1976
(17) Post Maintenance Functional Check Pilot Designation for LCDR Jeffrey F. SMITH, USN
(18) CO, HSL-33 ltr, code 3740 of 21 November 1975
(19) NATOPS Instrument Rating for LCDR Jeffrey F. SMITH, USN
(20) BUPERS Order no 140460Z dated 20 November 1975 to LT ^{B6} ^{B6} USN
(21) CO, HSL-33 ltr, code 1500 of 15 February 1977
(22) NATOPS Instrument Rating for LT ^{B6} USN
(23) Post Maintenance Functional Check Pilot Designation for LT ^{B6} ^{B6} USN
(24) transcripts of pages from aviator's flight log book of LT ^{B6} ^{B6} USN
(25) BUPERS Order no. 075689 dated 01 March 1974 to LT ^{B6} USN
(26) CO, HSL-33 ltr, code 1500 of 16 November 1976
(27) NATOPS Evaluation Report on LT ^{B6} USN, dated 10 February 1977

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- (28) NATOPS Instrument Rating for LT [redacted], USN
- (29) Statement of LT [redacted], USN, Det ONE Operations Officer
- (30) Transcripts of pages from aviator's flight log book of LT [redacted], USN
- (31) BUPERS Order no. 166529 dated 9 January 1976 to LTJG [redacted], USN
- (32) Statement of LTJG [redacted], USN, HSL-33 Det ONE Assistant Maintenance Officer and Division Officer
- (33) CO, HSL-33 ltr, code 1500 of 03 November 1976
- (34) NATOPS Instrument Rating for LTJG [redacted], USN
- (35) Transcripts of pages from aviator's flight log book of LTJG [redacted], USN
- (36) HSL-33 Detachment ONE message 172330Z April 1977
- (37) Page 2-2 of the SH-2D/F NATOPS Manual (NAVAIR 01-260HCD-1)
- (38) HSL-33 HAC Worksheet for LCDR Jeffrey F. SMITH, USN
- (39) HAC Worksheet for LT [redacted], USN
- (40) NATOPS Evaluation Report on LT [redacted], USN, dated 23 April 1976
- (41) CO HSL-31 ltr serial no 381 dated 23 April 1976
- (42) H2P Worksheet for LTJG [redacted], USN
- (43) NATOPS Evaluation Report on LTJG [redacted], USN dated 10 June 1976
- (44) CO, HSL-31 ltr serial no 533 dated 10 June 1976
- (45) Pages 11-3, 11-4 and 11-5 of OPNAV Instruction 3710.7H
- (46) COMNAVAIRPAC Instruction 3510.4E
- (47) Post Maintenance Functional Check Pilot Worksheet for LT [redacted], USN
- (48) Pages 1-8 and 7-9 of OPNAV Instruction 3710.7H
- (49) HSL-33 School/Course Completion Record for LT [redacted], USN
- (50) HSL-33 School/Course Completion Record for LCDR [redacted], USN
- (51) HSL-33 School/Course Completion Record for LT [redacted], USN
- (52) HSL-33 School/Course Completion Record for LTJG [redacted], USN
- (53) NATOPS Evaluation Report on AW3 [redacted], USN, dated 2 March 1977
- (54) Plane Captain designation for AW3 [redacted], USN, dated 17 January 1977
- (55) NATOPS Evaluation Report on AW3 [redacted], USN, dated 1 March 1977
- (56) Plane Captain designation of AW3 [redacted], USN dated 10 February 1977
- (57) HSL-33 message 111745Z November 1976
- (58) COMASWINGPAC message 152319Z November 1976
- (59) Statement of LCDR [redacted], USN HSL-31 FRAMP Officer
- (60) Training Record of AMCS [redacted], USN
- (61) Training Record of AET [redacted], USN
- (62) Training Record of ADJ1 [redacted], USN
- (63) Training Record of AMH2 [redacted], USN

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- (64) Training Record of AT2 [redacted] B6 [redacted], USN
- (65) Training Record of AE2 [redacted] [redacted], USN
- (66) Training Record of AMS3 [redacted], USN
- (67) Training Record of AX3 [redacted] [redacted], Jr., USN
- (68) Training Record of ADJAN [redacted], USN
- (69) Training Record of AN [redacted], USN
- (70) Statement of LCDR [redacted], USN HSL-33 Assistant Maintenance Officer and Detachment Liason Officer
- (71) Statement of ENS [redacted] B6 [redacted], USN, HSL-31 Assistant Quality Assurance Officer
- (72) [redacted] B1
- (73) CO, HSL-33 ltr, code 1321 of 10 November 1976
- (74) HSL-33 Assistant Maintenance Officer memorandum of 9 November 1976
- (75) HSL-33 Assistant Maintenance Officer memorandum of 19 November 1976
- (76) HSL-33 Assistant Maintenance Officer memorandum of 16 December 1976
- (77) HSL-33 Assistant Maintenance Officer memorandum of 19 January 1977
- (78) Statement of CDR [redacted] B6 [redacted], USN, Investigating Officer
- (79) Statement of LCDR [redacted] [redacted], USN, HSL-33 Maintenance Officer
- (80) Statement of LT [redacted] [redacted], USN, Officer in Charge, HSL-33 Detachment THREE
- (81) Statement of CAPT [redacted] B6 [redacted], (CF) Canadian Forces, Officer in Charge, HSL-33 Detachment TWO
- (82) Statement of CDR [redacted] B6 [redacted], USN, HSL-33 Executive Officer
- (83) Pages 2-1 and 2-2 of superseded SH-2D/F NATOPS Manual (NAVAIR 01-260HCD-1)
- (84) Page 1-20a of HSL-33 Instruction 5400.1 (HSL-33 Organization and Regulation Manual)
- (85) Page 1 of enclosure 2 of HSL-33 Instruction 1500.1A (HSL-33 Training Manual)
- (86) Page 1 of enclosure 9 of HSL-33 Instruction 1500.1A (HSL-33 Training Manual)
- (87) HSL-33 reporting endorsement to orders for LCDR Jeffrey F. SMITH, USN
- (88) HSL-33 reporting endorsement to orders for LT [redacted] B6 [redacted], USN
- (89) HSL-33 reporting endorsement to orders for LT [redacted] [redacted], USN
- (90) HSL-33 reporting endorsement to orders for LTJG [redacted] [redacted], USN

PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

1. As directed by enclosure (1) and in accordance with reference (a), an investigation has been conducted into the circumstances connected with the incident which may be related to the selection, assignment, and preparatory training of personnel to Detachment ONE by Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron Light THIRTY-THREE, the support and monitoring of the detachment by the squadron, and the relationship between the initial assignment of and the continuing capability of the Officer in Charge to discharge these duties and his duties as Helicopter Aircraft Commander after his initial assignment.

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2. The aircraft mishap which precipitated this investigation occurred at sea in the Western Pacific at 2358 local time on 11 March 1977. The aircraft was assigned to and operating from the USS STERETT (CG-31). The Officer in Charge of Detachment ONE and the Pilot in Command at the time of the accident, LCDR Jeffrey F. SMITH, USN, received fatal injuries in the accident. This investigation will cover events prior to the accident which relate to the preparation of Detachment ONE for deployment. As noted in enclosure (2), Commanding Officer, USS STERETT will conduct an investigation in accordance with reference (a) to inquire into the cause of the accident.

3. Although not specified in enclosure (1), verbal orders by the COMASWINGPAC Staff Legal Officer directed the investigating officer to include opinions and recommendations in the investigative report.

4. The investigation was conducted in HSL-33 squadron spaces, NAS North Island, and the Regional Dispensary, NAS North Island.

5. In view of the fact that Detachment ONE is on extended deployment, personal interviews with Det personnel was not feasible. Additionally, significant portions of information required for the investigation were not available from the parent command. Therefore, written statements and other pertinent material from the Det was forwarded to the investigating officer via registered mail. The length of time required to complete the investigation is the result of the delay in obtaining essential data.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. COMNAVAIRPAC message 280125Z of May 1976 promulgated the deployment schedule for LAMPS capable ships for calendar year 1977. The schedule assigned 3 detachments to HSL-33 during the first half of 1977. They are as follows:

DETACHMENT	SHIP	ETD
ONE	USS STERETT	15 FEB 77
TWO	USS BROOKE	12 APR 77
THREE	USS BAGLEY	12 APR 77

Enclosure: 3

2. Detachment ONE flew their aircraft aboard and embarked on the USS STERETT on 15 February 1977. The actual departure date from San Diego, California was 17 February 1977.

Enclosure: 4, 5

3. The HSL-33 Operations Officer has the responsibility of nominating pilots and aircrewmembers for assignment to detachments. The Assistant Maintenance

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Officer identifies candidates to fill the detachment maintenance billets.

Enclosures: 6, 7

4. At the time of deployment on 17 February 1977, Detachment ONE was comprised of the following personnel:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>BILLET ASSIGNMENT</u>
LCDR Jeffrey F. SMITH	Officer in Charge
LT [unclear]	Maintenance Officer
LT [unclear]	Operations Officer
LTJG [unclear]	Assistant Maint/Division Officer
AMCS [unclear]	CPO/QAR
AE1 [unclear]	LPO/QAR/CDI
ADJ1 [unclear]	CDI
AMH2 [unclear]	CDI
AT2 [unclear]	CDI
AE2 [unclear]	
AMS3 [unclear]	
AX3 [unclear]	
AW3 [unclear]	Aircrewman/PC
AW3 [unclear]	Aircrewman/PC
ADJAN [unclear]	
AN [unclear]	P/C

Enclosures: 7, 8, 76, 77

5. With two exceptions, all personnel listed in paragraph 4 above, were informally identified as members of Det ONE 6 to 8 months prior to the February deployment date. LT [unclear] was moved from Det THREE to Det ONE in November 1976 with the intention of placing him with a more experienced O-inC. The

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second modification to personnel assignments came in January 1977 when ADJAN CONNORS replaced ADAN [redacted] when the latter individual failed to sign an agreement for an extension of his enlistment. Of those assigned, LT [redacted] AE2 [redacted], AMS3 [redacted] and AX3 [redacted] had participated in previous major deployments with LAMPS detachments.

Enclosures: 7, 8, 9, 10, 76, 77, 79

6. The Commanding Officer of HSL-33 formally established Det ONE and designated LCDR Jeffrey F. SMITH as the Officer in Charge effective as of 15 December 1976. Det TWO was established on the same date and Det THREE was established on 20 December 1976. HSL-33 Detachments NINE and TEN were deployed to WESTPAC.

Enclosures: 7, 11, 80, 81

7. LCDR Jeffrey F. SMITH, USN, was assigned to HSL-33 on BUPERS Orders directing DIFOT. He was designated a Naval Aviator on 5 November 1965 and reported to HSL-33 on 21 March 1975. He was designated an SH-2F Helicopter Aircraft Commander (HAC) with an initial qualification date in HSL-33 of 12 August 1975. He successfully completed an SH-2D/F NATOPS HAC requalification flight on 27 August 1976. He was designated as a SH-2F Post Maintenance Functional Check Pilot (PMQA) and in Instrument Check Pilot. He held a current Special Instrument Rating. LCDR SMITH served in the billets of Assistant Maintenance Officer, NATOPS Officer, and Safety Department Head before assuming the duties as O-in-C of Det ONE. Prior to reporting to HSL-33, he flew H-2 type aircraft in HC-4, HC-5 and served as an instructor pilot in HSL-31. His previous detachment experience did not include LAMPS.

Enclosures: 6, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 79, 87

8. LT [redacted] [redacted], USN, was assigned to HSL-33 on BUPERS Orders directing DIFOT. He was designated a Naval Aviator on 9 February 1973 and reported to HSL-33 on 26 April 1976. He was designated an SH-2F HAC on 15 February 1977. He possesses a current Standard Instrument Rating and was designated and SH-2F PMQA pilot on 16 February 1977. LT [redacted] served in the capacity of Human Resources Officer and Educational Services Officer.

Enclosures: 10, 13, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 88

9. LT [redacted] [redacted], USN, was assigned to HSL-33 on BUPERS Orders directing DIFOT. He was designated a Naval Aviator on 22 March 1974 and reported to HSL-33 on 25 September 1974. He was designated an SH-2F HAC on 16 November 1976 and successfully completed a NATOPS requalification flight on 9 February 1977. He possesses a current Standard Instrument Rating. LT [redacted] served in the billet of Public Affairs Officer. In addition, he had a TAD assignment as a LAMPS

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Tactics Instructor. He had previously participated in a WESTPAC LAMPS deployment aboard the USS KIRK (FF-1087) with HSL-33 DetFOUR from March until October 1975.

Enclosures 6, 13, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 89

10. LTJG [redacted], USN, was assigned to HSL-33 on BUPERS Orders directing DIFOT. He was designated a Naval Aviator on 25 January 1976 and reported to HSL-33 on 14 June 1976. He was designated an SH-2F Helicopter Second Pilot (H2P) on 3 November 1976. LTJG [redacted] hold a current Standard Instrument Rating. His billet assignment in HSL-33 was Public Affairs Officer.

Enclosures: 13, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 90

11. A compilation of flight experience for Det ONE pilots is shown below. The figures for the "last 6 months" covers the period 10 September 1976 through 10 March 1977. The "last 90 days" reflects data 10 December 1976 through 10 March 1977. The "last 30 days" figure is 10 February 1977 through 10 March 1977.

	LCDR SMITH	LT HACKETT	LT STEELE	LTJG RUEHE
TOTAL FLIGHT HOURS	2563.4	909.1	717.6	410.6
TOTAL H-2 HOURS	908.7	157.8	493.5	190.4
TOTAL HOURS LAST 6 MOS.	63.4	64.0	70.9	97.8
TOTAL HOURS LAST 90 DAYS	17.6	29.1	24.8	24.9
TOTAL HOURS LAST 30 DAYS	15.1	16.3	19.1	20.3
TOTAL NITE HOURS LAST 6 MOS.	9.4	15.9	18.7	16.3
TOTAL NITE HOURS LAST 90 DAYS	0	2.6	1.7	1.7
TOTAL NITE HOURS LAST 30 DAYS	0	0	1.7	1.7
TOTAL INST HOURS LAST 6 MOS.	9.0	26.1	18.8	16.6
TOTAL INST HOURS LAST 90 DAYS	1.5	3.9	5.8	4.4
TOTAL INST HOURS LAST 30 DAYS	1.2	1.6	5.3	4.4
TOTAL DAY SHIP LDGS LAST 6 MOS.	25	16	13	12
TOTAL DAY SHIP LDGS LAST 90 DAYS	11	7	3	4
TOTAL DAY SHIP LDGS LAST 30 DAYS	11	7	3	3

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	LCDR SMITH	LT HACKETT	LT STEELE	LTJG RUEHE
TOTAL NITE SHIP LDGS LAST 6 MOS.	3	4	3	1
TOTAL NITE SHIP LDGS LAST 90 DAYS	0	0	1	0
TOTAL NITE SHIP LDGS LAST 30 DAYS	0	0	1	0

Enclosures: 6, 14, 24, 30, 35, 36

12. The night flight on 11 March 1977, during which the accident occurred, was the first flight for LCDR SMITH since 26 February 1977 and his first night flight since 7 December 1976. During the 90 day period preceeding the accident, he had accumulated a total of 17.6 flight hours, none of which were at night. For the 6 month period from 1 September 1976 through 28 February 1977, LCDR SMITH accrued a total of 9.4 night hours. Of this total 1.0 was flown in November (1 flight) and 8.4 was flown in December (4 flights). No night flights were flown during the other 4 months of the 6 month period.

Enclosures: 6, 14, 36

13. The co-pilot at the time of the accident, LT HACKETT, had accumulated 29.1 flight hours during the previous 90 days, of which 2.6 were at night. In January 1977, his total night time was 0.3. No night flights were flown in February 1977 and none were flown in March 1977 prior to the flight in which the accident occurred.

Enclosures: 6, 24, 36

14. During the 90 days preceeding the mishap, LT HACKETT and LTJG RUEHE collected 24.8 and 24.9 total flight hours, respectively. Through the same period, each pilot had a total of 1.7 night flight time which was flown in February 1977. Neither pilot participated in any night flights in January 1977 or March 1977.

Enclosures: 6, 30, 35, 36

15. The average monthly total/night flight time for the 4 pilots of Det ONE from 1 September 1976 through 28 February 1977 is as follows:

	<u>TOTAL HOURS</u>	<u>NIGHT HOURS</u>
SEPTEMBER 1976	11.0	3.6
OCTOBER 1976	8.2	2.9
NOVEMBER 1976	15.3	0.5
DECEMBER 1976	17.5	8.6
JANUARY 1977	3.1	0.1
FEBRUARY 1977	17.0	0.8

Enclosures: 14, 24, 30, 35, 36

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16. Page 2-2 of the current SH-2D/F NATOPS Manual (NAVAIR 01-260HCD-1) states that 6 day and 6 night landings are required for pilot day/night initial qualification aboard single landing spot ships. To maintain day/night ship landing currency, 3 day and 3 night landings are required within the previous 6 months. The NATOPS Manual further specifies that if currency requirements are not met, shipboard landing requalification is required. The present issue of the NATOPS Manual became effective on 15 January 1976. The previous edition of NATOPS specified the same number of single spot landings for initial qualification, but only required 4 day and 4 night landings every 12 months to retain currency.

Enclosures: 37, 83

17. After reporting to HSL-33, LCDR SMITH performed 2 night shipboard landings on 14 August 1975. The next time he performed night shipboard landings was in December 1976. He was credited with one night landing on the 4th, 6th and 7th of December for a total of 3 night landings for the month. No night shipboard landings are recorded for LCDR SMITH during January, February or March 1977. From 1 September 1976 through 28 February 1977, he performed 25 day small deck landings.

Enclosures: 6, 14

18. A HAC Worksheet contained in LCDR SMITH'S training record sets forth certain squadron requirements for attaining a HAC designation. Of the 14 HAC requirements listed on the Worksheet, only 6 are indicated as having been completed by LCDR SMITH. One of the requirements shown as being completed is titled, "Initial Qual. Single Landing Spot Ship Landings/HIFR". The date of "8 July 1976" is entered as the completion date for this requirement. His flight log book shows only 1 flight for the month of July 1976. That flight was on 14 July and credited him with 1 day ship landing, his first day ship landing since December 1975.

Enclosure: 38

19. LT [redacted] achieved his initial small deck day landing qualification in September 1976 and had accomplished a total of 16 day ship landings through March 1977. He has a total of 4 night ship landings which were all performed on 17 October 1976.

Enclosures: 6, 24

20. LT [redacted] performed 5 night ship landings on 20 April 1976. He recorded no night ship landings again until he logged 1 landing each on the 3rd and 5th of December 1976. He is also credited with 1 night ship landing on 22 February 1977, bringing his total night small deck landing for the previous 6 months to 3. For the same 6 month period, he accomplished 13 day ship landings.

Enclosures: 6, 30

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21. LTJG [redacted] accomplished his initial day and night ship landing qualification in August 1976. Since that time, one night ship landing was performed on 6 December 1976, for his only other recorded night landing. In the previous 6 months, he had a total of 12 day ship landings.

Enclosures: 6, 35

22. The total night flight hours and the total night shipboard landings accumulated by Det ONE pilots for the period 1 January 1977 through 10 March 1977 is as follows:

	<u>NIGHT HOURS</u>	<u>NIGHT SHIP LDGS</u>
LCDR SMITH	0	0
LT [redacted]	0.3	0
LT [redacted]	1.7	1
LTJG [redacted]	1.7	0

Enclosures: 6, 14, 24, 30, 35, 36

23. LT [redacted] was designated a HAC in the SH-2F by the CO, HSL-33 with an effective date of 15 February 1977. The HAC Worksheet in LT [redacted] Training Record indicates a completion date of 29 April 1976 for a HAC NATOPS Check Flight and a completion date of 10 November 1976 for a HAC LAMPS Mission Check. There is no other record in the Training Jacket to substantiate completion of these flights. The latest NATOPS Evaluation Report (OPNAV 3510/8) for LT [redacted] indicates he successfully completed a Pilot Qualified in Model (PQM) NATOPS evaluation flight on 22 April 1976 while attached to the Readiness and Training Squadron (HSL-31). He was designated PQM effective 23 April 1976 but there is no record of him progressing to the level of Helicopter Second Pilot (H2P) prior to becoming HAC.

Enclosures: 21, 24, 39, 40, 41

24. LTJG [redacted] was designated an H2P in the SH-2F by the CO, HSL-33 with an effective date of 3 November 1976. The H2P Worksheet in LTJG [redacted] Training Record indicates the H2P LAMPS Mission Check Flight was completed on 9 August 1976. There is no other record in the Training Jacket to substantiate completion of this flight and no flight is recorded in the pilot's log book for that date. The most recent NATOPS Evaluation Report (OPNAV 3510/8) for LTJG [redacted] indicates his successful completion of a PQM NATOPS Evaluation Flight and the subsequent PQM designation effective 10 June 1976. This evaluation and designation were given while attached to the Readiness and Training Squadron (HSL-31).

Enclosures: 33, 35, 42, 43, 44

25. OPNAV Instruction 3710.7H delineates specific requirements for HAC and H2P designations in rotary-wing aircraft. While it does not specifically

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state that a NATOPS evaluation is a prerequisite for HAC, an individual must have completed the requirements for H2P. Among the requirements for H2P is the satisfactory completion of a NATOPS evaluation in model aircraft. COMNAVAIRPAC Instruction 3510.4E further directs that a NATOPS evaluation is required for pilots prior to being advanced beyond third pilot or equivalent designation and that the evaluation will consist of both a ground and flight phase.

Enclosures: 45, 46

26. Prior to his designation as an SH-2F PMQA pilot on 16 February 1977, LT [redacted] had accumulated 7 post maintenance functional check flights for a total of 7.9 flight hours and records indicate completion of the HSL-33 Functional Check Pilot ground training.

Enclosures: 23, 24, 47

27. The Pre-Deployment Checkout Requirements for Det ONE indicates LT [redacted] last attended Night Vision Training in February 1973. OPNAV Instruction 3711.7H requires visual and orientation training every three years. Night vision requirements for the remaining Det ONE pilots as well as the requirements for SERE, maintenance swims and flight physicals for all 4 pilots are current.

Enclosures: 8, 48, 49

28. The HSL-33 Pre-Deployment Requirements require all Det pilots to complete the Coordinated ASW Operations Course (K-2E-1038) and the ATACCO Course (K-2E-1076). Training records indicate LT [redacted] was the only Det ONE pilot to complete these courses. LCDR SMITH did complete the Command Course in ASW Operations (K-2E-1077/1078). Neither LCDR SMITH nor LT [redacted] attended the Naval Gunfire Support course and LCDR SMITH had not completed the Shipboard Firefighting course (K-780-2124). These are stated as required training by HSL-33 Instruction 3700.1A.

Enclosures: 8, 29, 49, 50, 51, 52

29. AW3 [redacted] successfully completed his initial Sensor Operator NATOPS evaluation flight on 10 February 1977. The NATOPS Evaluation Report (OPNAV 3510/8) was incomplete in that the form was not signed by AW3 [redacted] or the Commanding Officer prior to the departure of Det ONE on 17 February 1977. AW3 [redacted] was designated a Plane Captain in the SH-2F on 17 January 1977.

Enclosures: 53, 54

30. AW3 [redacted] successfully completed his initial Sensor Operator NATOPS evaluation flight on 9 February 1977. He was designated a Plane Captain in the SH-2F on 10 February 1977.

Enclosures: 55, 56

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31. AW3 [redacted] had not completed the Corrosion Control Course (C-000-3177) as required by the HSL-33 Pre-Deployment Checkout Requirements Instruction for all Detachment Enlisted personnel. AW3 [redacted] and AW3 [redacted] had completed requirements for SERE, maintenance swims and flight physicals.

Enclosure: 8

32. AMCS [redacted] CAVALLIN, Det ONE CPO, reported to HSL-31 Fleet Replacement Aviation Maintenance Personnel Department (FRAMP) on 22 October 1976. He was programmed for 7 SH-2/Maintenance courses of instruction while enrolled in the SH-2 LAMPS Detachment Crew Leader Course and was scheduled for completion of FRAMP the week of 10 January 1977. Because of the impending assignment of AMCS [redacted] to Det ONE, the scheduled February 1977 deployment, and the desire to have him participate in the work-up cruises, HSL-33 requested that COMASWINGPAC authorize the early termination of his FRAMP training and allow his transfer to HSL-33 as of 12 November 1976. COMASWINGPAC approved the request with the provision that a preassigned quota be allotted to AMCS CAVALLIN for a missed course. Prior to FRAMP termination, AMCS [redacted] completed 2 of the 7 maintenance courses and had been issued preassigned quotas for 4 of the 5 remaining courses. Of these 4 quotas, 2 were utilized and 2 were cancelled by the HSL-33 Maintenance Department. Two other Senior CPO's had been tentatively identified as possible replacements in the event AMCS [redacted] was not available for Det deployment.

Enclosures: 7, 57, 58, 59

33. The following Det ONE maintenance personnel are designated SH-2F Quality Assurance Representatives (QAR) and/or Collateral Duty Inspectors (CDI):

AAMCS [redacted]-----QAR for all systems
AE1 [redacted]-----QAR for all systems and CDI for electrical systems
ADJ1 [redacted]-----CDI for power plants and related systems
AMH2 [redacted]-----CDI for airframes systems
AT2 [redacted]-----CDI for electronic and related systems

Enclosures: 8, 60 through 64

34. One of the FRAMP courses which AMCS [redacted] did not complete because of his early termination was Quality Assurance Administration (C-516-3206).

Enclosure: 59

35. Requirements for QAR's, CDI's, Plane Captains, LSE's Eddy Current training and weapons loading/ordnance handling certifications were completed.

Enclosures: 8, 54, 56, 60 through 69

36. The Pre Deployment Checkout Requirements indicates that all Det ONE maintenance personnel had completed the Corrosion Control Course (C-000-3177)

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with the exception of ADJ1 #'. However, training records can verify that only 5 of the 10 individuals had completed this course. Two personnel, AMCS CAVALLIN and AN REDDING, had not completed the Shipboard Fire Fighting Course (K-780-2124).

Enclosures: 8, 60 through 69

37. In November 1976, SH-2F BUNO 150142 was identified as the aircraft to be assigned to Det ONE. The projected date for actual transfer of the aircraft to the Det was 17 December 1976. HSL-33 had 4 aircraft available from which to select 3 for the forthcoming detachments. Other squadron aircraft were either deployed or had Period End Dates (PED) which made them unsuitable for deployment.

Enclosure: 70

38. A crack was found in the Tail Rotor Gear Box (TRGB) on the aircraft belonging to an HSL-33 deployed detachment (Det TEN) and required removal. There were no replacements available in the supply system and the TRGB on Det ONE's aircraft (BUNO 150142) was removed and shipped to Det TEN. This led to placing BUNO 150142 into a special interest category on 6 December 1976. Because of the removal of the TRGB, coupled with the existence of numerous other maintenance discrepancies, BUNO 150142 was in a "down" status through 2 February 1977.

Enclosures: 70, 71

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Enclosures: 70, 71

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Enclosures: 6, 14, 24, 30, 35

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Enclosures: 6, 10, 29, 32, 72, 73, 74

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Enclosures: 6, 74

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Enclosures: 6, 75

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Enclosure: 6

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Enclosures: 6, 10

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Enclosures: 6, 10, 29, 32

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Enclosures: 6, 9, 79 82

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Enclosures: 6, 9, 79, 82

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Enclosures: 4, 6, 9, 82

55. LT [redacted], LT [redacted] and LTJG [redacted] indicate that there was a lack of communication between LCDR SMITH and members of the Det and that he provided only limited guidance with regards to predeployment preparation. Their assessment of the situation was that he was not interested in becoming as deeply involved in the Det activities as an OinC should have been and that he did not aggressively pursue the accomplishment of their training requirements. LT [redacted] and LTJG [redacted] state LCDR SMITH had indicated to them that he was not particularly interested in ASW. LT [redacted] also states that a few days prior to the mishap LCDR SMITH informed him that he had decided to request to be relieved as OinC.

Enclosures: 10, 29, 32

56. The squadron monitored the Detachment's training through bi-weekly meetings utilizing the pre-deployment checklist. These meetings were normally conducted in the CO's office with the XO, Department Heads, OinC and Det Liason Officer in attendance. At the last such meeting in early February 1977, the only training/qualifications that were identified as lacking was night shipboard landings for LT [redacted] and LTJG [redacted]. In addition to the formal bi-weekly meetings, the OinC meets regularly with the Det Liason Officer and Department Heads to discuss the Det training and review the pre-deployment checklist. The pre-deployment checklist does not contain information pertaining to shipboard landing qualifications or currency.

Enclosures: 6, 7, 8, 9, 82

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57. The Pre-Deployment Checklist for Det ONE was not complete in several respects. Some information proved to be incorrect, some items were not filled out at all, and other items simply contained check marks with no completion dates or signatures.

Enclosure: 8

58. HSL-33 Instruction 5400.1 is the HSL-33 Organization and Regulation Manual. Page 1-20a of this instruction outlines the responsibilities of the Det Liason Officer. It states that he is the coordinator between the parent squadron and the Det. Among his other responsibilities is the requirement to review the Pre-Deployment Checklist with the OinC on a bi-weekly basis and to assist the Dets with their training.

Enclosure: 84

59. Page 1 of enclosure (2) of HSL-33 Instruction 1500.1A (HSL-33 Training Manual) states that the Operations Officer has the overall responsibility for directing the Pilot and Aircrewman Flight Training Program.

Enclosure: 85

60. Page 1 of enclosure (9) of HSL-33 Instruction 1500.1A directs Det OinC's to insure that all squadron training requirements are met by Det personnel after Detachment formation.

Enclosure: 86

OPINIONS

1. The simultaneous establishment and work-up of 3 detachments, together with the fact that 2 other detachments were deployed, placed an abnormal strain on the squadron in regards to available personnel and aircraft assets.

Findings of Facts: 6, 37

2. Although established at the same time, Dets TWO and THREE had nearly 2 months additional time to prepare for deployment. The formal establishment of Det ONE was as normally scheduled (2 months prior to deployment) but this resulted in a much more compressed training schedule than the one experienced by the other 2 dets.

Findings of Facts: 1, 6

3. LCDR SMITH was properly designated as the Officer in Charge of Det ONE.

Finding of Fact: 6

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4. Det ONE was not properly prepared for deployment in that none of the assigned pilots were current in night shipboard landings in accordance with NATOPS. The status of each pilot in night small deck landings at the time of deployment is as follows:

a. LCDR SMITH had not requalified at night since reporting to HSL-33 even though he made 3 night landings in December 1976. The entry in his Training Record which indicated he had completed his landing qualification in July 1976 was in error.

b. LT [redacted] had not completed his initial night qualification. He is credited with a total of 4 night landings.

c. LT [redacted] night currency had expired on 20 October 1976 when he had not performed a night landing in the previous 6 months. He had accomplished 3 night landings on 3 separate occasions since October but had not requalified.

d. LTJG [redacted] night currency expired on 17 February 1977 (date of deployment) because he had made only one night ship landing in the 6 month period preceeding that date.

Findings of Facts: 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21

5. Det ONE pilots were seriously deficient in night flight hours during the 6 month period prior to the accident and were particularly lacking in night time in the previous 90 days. In the last 90 days, LT [redacted] logged 2.6 hours and LT [redacted] and LTJG [redacted] had accumulated 1.7 hours each. LCDR SMITH recorded no night time.

Findings of Facts: 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 22

6. The average monthly total flight time for the 4 pilots during the 6 month period from 1 September 1976 through 28 February 1977 is 12 hours.

Findings of Facts: 11, 15

7. The lack of dedicated deck time for landing qualification contributed to the deficiencies in night shipboard landings. However, there were several opportunities available to at least obtain the minimum night qualification/currency requirements. Det ONE participated in three significant at-sea exercises. COMTUEX 1-77 and READIEX 2-77 were prior to deployment and RIMPAC 77 took place during the Det's transit to WESTPAC. There was no time during these exercises dedicated to night landing practice. No night flying was accomplished during COMTUEX 1-77 and 1.7 night hours and 1 night landing was recorded during RIMPAC 77.

Findings of Facts: 41, 42, 43, 44, 49

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8. A major reason for Det ONE's lack of training flights and pilot proficiency/qualifications can be attributed to the fact that their assigned aircraft was not available through the critical period of their pre-deployment preparations. Through January and February 1977 only 4 training flights are recorded by Det pilots in substitute aircraft.

Findings of Facts: 37, 38, 39, 40

9. LCDR SMITH possessed the background and experience necessary to meet the qualifications for a detachment OinC. However, after his assignment as OinC, he did not properly discharge his responsibilities. He was negligent in the performance of his duty when:

a. He failed to ensure that he and the personnel in his detachment were properly trained.

b. He failed to recognize and take corrective action to eliminate the existing deficiencies.

c. He failed to bring the deficiencies to the attention of proper authority.

Findings of Facts: 7, 17, 22, 27, 28, 36, 42, 44, 49, 50, 55, 56, 57, 60

10. Throughout the predeployment work-up phase, LCDR SMITH provided only limited leadership and guidance to personnel of his Det and did not forcefully seek to achieve completion of training requirements. His attitude toward the deployment vacillated and at times he exhibited to other Det members a lack of enthusiasm for the deployment and the ASW mission. Preoccupation with and anxiety over his contributed to his attitude and performance. LCDR SMITH'S apprehension toward the cruise was not perceived by the CO or XO.

Findings of Facts: 52, 54, 55

11. The squadron depends primarily on 2 sources of information to monitor the Detachments training progress. These sources are the Det OinC and the Pre-Deployment Checkout Requirements (HSL-33 Inst. 3700.1A). Detachment training records are generally not reviewed or inspected by other squadron personnel. Utilizing these procedures, the squadron is almost totally dependent upon the Det OinC to recognize and report any deficiencies or problem areas. The Inspector conducting the COMASWINGPAC Detachment Readiness Evaluation also relies mainly on the OinC for information. If the Det OinC fails to bring attention to weaknesses, they may go unnoticed by the squadron or inspecting officer. In addition, the Pre-Deployment Checkout is not a good source to utilize for measuring Det progress since there are many requirements, such as shipboard landing qualifications, which are not included.

Findings of Facts: 50, 56

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12. The capabilities and the level of readiness in ASW tactics and maintenance was degraded because of the failure of personnel to complete required ground training courses prior to deployment.

Findings of Facts: 27, 28, 31, 36

13. Among the officers, the experience level and training in aircraft maintenance procedures was extremely limited. LCDR SMITH previously served as Assistant Maintenance Officer but the other officers have had billets outside the Maintenance Department. LT ~~SW~~ received only moderate training just prior to deployment in order to prepare him for a PMQA designation.

Findings of Facts: 7, 8, 9, 19, 26

14. ~~COMMITTEE~~

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Findings of Facts: 23, 24, 25

15. The training records of the pilots and aircrew lack standardization and in several instances, provided conflicting or inaccurate information. Also information in the Pre-Deployment Checklist did not always concur with that contained in the training jackets.

Findings of Facts: 18, 23, 24, 28, 29, 36

RECOMMENDATIONS

1.
 it.

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Opinions: 4, 5, 6

2.

BS + B6

Opinions: 4, 5, 6, 12

3.

BS + B6

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Opinions: 4, 5, 6, 12

4. It is recommended that Detachments be established in sufficient time to ensure that all training requirements and qualifications are attained no later than 30 days prior to deployment.

Opinions: 1, 2

5. It is recommended that HSL-33 incorporate a more effective procedure for maintaining closer monitoring of detachment training from within the parent command so that timely identification of weaknesses can be made and corrective measures taken.

Opinion: 11

6. It is recommended that HSL-33 promulgate procedures which will ensure that detachments undergoing pre-deployment training are provided with a substitute aircraft if their own aircraft is in a non-flying status.

Opinion: 8

7. It is recommended that COMASWINGPAC continue the efforts to obtain dedicated deck time for day and night shipboard landing proficiency and qualification.

Opinions: 4, 7

8. It is recommended that COMASWINGPAC establish more stringent requirements for the Detachment Readiness Evaluation and that this inspection be conducted no later than 30 days prior to deployment. It is further recommended that a written report be submitted by the inspecting officer on the results of the evaluation.

Opinion: 11

9. It is recommended that HSL-33 rewrite the Pre-Deployment Checkout Requirements (HSL-33 Inst. 3700.1A) to include items such as shipboard landing qualifications/currency and other pertinent flight data. More specific guidance should be given as to who should sign off completed items and what information is to be entered in each section.

Opinion: 11

10. It is recommended that HSL-33 conduct a complete review/update of all pilot and aircrewmen training jackets to ensure standardization, accuracy and currency of information contained therein.

Opinion: 15

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11.

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Opinion: 14

12. It is recommended that HSL-33 make every attempt to assign at least one officer to each detachment who possesses a thorough knowledge and understanding of the aircraft maintenance organization as well as the SH-2F systems.

Opinion: 13

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COMMANDER
ANTI-SUBMARINE WARFARE WING
U.S. PACIFIC FLEET
NAVAL AIR STATION, NORTH ISLAND
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92135

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FF7-11/011:PMG:at
5800
Ser: C-41
28 June 1977

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on CDR *Bo*, USN, ltr of 25 May 1977

From: Commander Anti-Submarine Warfare Wing, U. S. Pacific Fleet
To: Judge Advocate General
Via: Commander Naval Air Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet

Subj: Investigation to inquire into the circumstances connected with the aircraft mishap of 11 March 1977 involving aircraft SH-2F BUNO 150142, embarked in USS STERETT with HSL-33, DET ONE, which resulted in the death of LCDR Jeffrey F. SMITH, U. S. Navy

Ref: (c) Telcon between CDR *Bo* (COMASWINGPAC) and CDR *Bo* (OP591) of 17 June 1977

Encl: (91) COMASWINGPAC msg 312057Z Mar 1977
(92) Attachment 1, COMASWINGPACINST 3710.17
(93) COMNAVAIRPAC msg 262215Z May 1977

1. Readdressed and forwarded.
2. The Preliminary Statement and Findings of Fact are approved.
3. The Opinions are approved with the following exceptions:
 - (a.) Opinion 14 is disapproved.

BS

4. The recommendations are approved with the following comments and exceptions:

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a. Recommendations 1 and 2 are amended as follows: Hearings in accordance with Article 15, UCMJ, will be held to determine the extent, if any, of dereliction of duty on the part of Commander Mosser and Lieutenant Commander Mahoney in conjunction with this accident. Commander Naval Air Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet, will be notified of the results of the hearings. ^{BS}

b. Recommendation 3 is disapproved.

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c. Direction to implement Recommendations 4, 5, 6, 9, 10 and 12 has been forwarded by separate letter to Commanding Officer, Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron Light THIRTY-THREE, for action.

d. Recommendation 7: As set forth in enclosure (91) this Command has requested that Commander Third Fleet schedule six hours per week (three day and three night) of small deck ship time for helicopter CQ and HIFR. Third and fourth quarter Fiscal Year 1977 schedules reflect this requirement, and currently all necessary helicopter pilot qualifications are being accomplished. In addition, minimum pre-deployment pilot proficiency standards have been addressed in Attachment 1 to COMASWINGPACINST 3710.17 of 9 June 1977, enclosure (92). These requirements are considerably more stringent than those in the SH-2F NATOPS and will ensure full qualification and proficiency prior to future detachments. This subject will also be covered in detail in a joint COMNAVAIRPAC/COMNAVSURFPAC instruction currently being written on the subject of "Helicopter Detachment Training, Workup and Proficiency Standards," as indicated by enclosure (93).

e. Recommendation 8: Upon completion of the joint instruction, COMASWINGPACINST C3500.16 will be revised to ensure that all Detachment Readiness Evaluations will be conducted no later than 30 days prior to deployment, will include review of pilot logbooks, and will conclude with a written report.

f. Recommendation 11 is disapproved,

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31. AW3 [redacted] had not completed the Corrosion Control Course (C-000-3177) as required by the HSL-33 Pre-Deployment Checkout Requirements Instruction for all Detachment Enlisted personnel. AW3 [redacted] and AW3 [redacted] had completed requirements for SERE, maintenance swims and flight physicals.

Enclosure: 8

32. AMCS [redacted], Det ONE CPO, reported to HSL-31 Fleet Replacement Aviation Maintenance Personnel Department (FRAMP) on 22 October 1976. He was programmed for 7 SH-2/Maintenance courses of instruction while enrolled in the SH-2 LAMPS Detachment Crew Leader Course and was scheduled for completion of FRAMP the week of 10 January 1977. Because of the impending assignment of AMCS [redacted] to Det ONE, the scheduled February 1977 deployment, and the desire to have him participate in the work-up cruises, HSL-33 requested that COMASWINGPAC authorize the early termination of his FRAMP training and allow his transfer to HSL-33 as of 12 November 1976. COMASWINGPAC approved the request with the provision that a preassigned quota be allotted to AMCS CAVALLIN for a missed course. Prior to FRAMP termination, AMCS [redacted] completed 2 of the 7 maintenance courses and had been issued preassigned quotas for 4 of the 5 remaining courses. Of these 4 quotas, 2 were utilized and 2 were cancelled by the HSL-33 Maintenance Department. Two other Senior CPO's had been tentatively identified as possible replacements in the event AMCS [redacted] was not available for Det deployment.

Enclosures: 7, 57, 58, 59

33. The following Det ONE maintenance personnel are designated SH-2F Quality Assurance Representatives (QAR) and/or Collateral Duty Inspectors (CDI):

AAMCS [redacted]-----QAR for all systems
AE1 [redacted]-----QAR for all systems and CDI for electrical systems
ADJ1 [redacted]-----CDI for power plants and related systems
AMH2 [redacted]-----CDI for airframes systems
AT2 [redacted]-----CDI for electronic and related systems

Enclosures: 8, 60 through 64

34. One of the FRAMP courses which AMCS [redacted] did not complete because of his early termination was Quality Assurance Administration (C-516-3206).

Enclosure: 59

35. Requirements for QAR's, CDI's, Plane Captains, LSE's Eddy Current training and weapons loading/ordnance handling certifications were completed.

Enclosures: 8, 54, 56, 60 through 69

36. The Pre Deployment Checkout Requirements indicates that all Det ONE maintenance personnel had completed the Corrosion Control Course (C-000-3177)

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with the exception of ADJ1 P'. However, training records can verify that only 5 of the 10 individuals had completed this course. Two personnel, AMCS CAVALLIN and AN REDDING, had not completed the Shipboard Fire Fighting Course (K-780-2124).

Enclosures: 8, 60 through 69

37. In November 1976, SH-2F BUNO 150142 was identified as the aircraft to be assigned to Det ONE. The projected date for actual transfer of the aircraft to the Det was 17 December 1976. HSL-33 had 4 aircraft available from which to select 3 for the forthcoming detachments. Other squadron aircraft were either deployed or had Period End Dates (PED) which made them unsuitable for deployment.

Enclosure: 70

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Enclosures: 6, 9, 79, 82

54. CDR [redacted] (CO), CDR [redacted] (XO) AND LCDR [redacted] (OPS) stated they were aware of LCDR SMITH'S [redacted] and all agreed that while LCDR SMITH was troubled by his [redacted], they were convinced that he was capable of performing his duties as OinC. CDR [redacted] and CDR [redacted] were of the opinion that he was willing and eager to make the deployment. LCDR [redacted], after completion of the Detachment Evaluation, stated that LCDR SMITH did not seem unduly distressed by [redacted] [redacted].

Enclosures: 4, 6, 9, 82

55. LT [redacted], LT [redacted] and LTJG [redacted] indicate that there was a lack of communication between LCDR SMITH and members of the Det and that he provided only limited guidance with regards to predeployment preparation. Their assessment of the situation was that he was not interested in becoming as deeply involved in the Det activities as an OinC should have been and that he did not aggressively pursue the accomplishment of their training requirements. LT [redacted] and LTJG [redacted] state LCDR SMITH had indicated to them that he was not particularly interested in ASW. LT [redacted] also states that a few days prior to the mishap LCDR SMITH informed him that he had decided to request to be relieved as OinC.

Enclosures: 10, 29, 32

56. The squadron monitored the Detachment's training through bi-weekly meetings utilizing the pre-deployment checklist. These meetings were normally conducted in the CO's office with the XO, Department Heads, OinC and Det Liason Officer in attendance. At the last such meeting in early February 1977, the only training/qualifications that were identified as lacking was night shipboard landings for LT [redacted] and LTJG [redacted]. In addition to the formal bi-weekly meetings, the OinC meets regularly with the Det Liason Officer and Department Heads to discuss the Det training and review the pre-deployment checklist. The pre-deployment checklist does not contain information pertaining to shipboard landing qualifications or currency.

Enclosures: 6, 7, 8, 9, 82

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57. The Pre-Deployment Checklist for Det ONE was not complete in several respects. Some information proved to be incorrect, some items were not filled out at all, and other items simply contained check marks with no completion dates or signatures.

Enclosure: 8

58. HSL-33 Instruction 5400.1 is the HSL-33 Organization and Regulation Manual. Page 1-20a of this instruction outlines the responsibilities of the Det Liason Officer. It states that he is the coordinator between the parent squadron and the Det. Among his other responsibilities is the requirement to review the Pre-Deployment Checklist with the OinC on a bi-weekly basis and to assist the Dets with their training.

Enclosure: 84

59. Page 1 of enclosure (2) of HSL-33 Instruction 1500.1A (HSL-33 Training Manual) states that the Operations Officer has the overall responsibility for directing the Pilot and Aircrewman Flight Training Program.

Enclosure: 85

60. Page 1 of enclosure (9) of HSL-33 Instruction 1500.1A directs Det OinC's to insure that all squadron training requirements are met by Det personnel after Detachment formation.

Enclosure: 86

OPINIONS

1. The simultaneous establishment and work-up of 3 detachments, together with the fact that 2 other detachments were deployed, placed an abnormal strain on the squadron in regards to available personnel and aircraft assets.

Findings of Facts: 6, 37

2. Although established at the same time, Dets TWO and THREE had nearly 2 months additional time to prepare for deployment. The formal establishment of Det ONE was as normally scheduled (2 months prior to deployment) but this resulted in a much more compressed training schedule than the one experienced by the other 2 dets.

Findings of Facts: 1, 6

3. LCDR SMITH was properly designated as the Officer in Charge of Det ONE.

Finding of Fact: 6

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4. Det ONE was not properly prepared for deployment in that none of the assigned pilots were current in night shipboard landings in accordance with NATOPS. The status of each pilot in night small deck landings at the time of deployment is as follows:

a. LCDR SMITH had not requalified at night since reporting to HSL-33 even though he made 3 night landings in December 1976. The entry in his Training Record which indicated he had completed his landing qualification in July 1976 was in error.

b. LT had not completed his initial night qualification. He is credited with a total of 4 night landings.

c. LT night currency had expired on 20 October 1976 when he had not performed a night landing in the previous 6 months. He had accomplished 3 night landings on 3 separate occasions since October but had not requalified.

d. LTJG night currency expired on 17 February 1977 (date of deployment) because he had made only one night ship landing in the 6 month period preceeding that date.

Findings of Facts: 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21

5. Det ONE pilots were seriously deficient in night flight hours during the 6 month period prior to the accident and were particularly lacking in night time in the previous 90 days. In the last 90 days, LT logged 2.6 hours and LT and LTJG had accumulated 1.7 hours each. LCDR SMITH recorded no night time.

Findings of Facts: 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 22

6. The average monthly total flight time for the 4 pilots during the 6 month period from 1 September 1976 through 28 February 1977 is 12 hours.

Findings of Facts: 11, 15

7. The lack of dedicated deck time for landing qualification contributed to the deficiencies in night shipboard landings. However, there were several opportunities available to at least obtain the minimum night qualification/currency requirements. Det ONE participated in three significant at-sea exercises. COMTUEX 1-77 and READIEX 2-77 were prior to deployment and RIMPAC 77 took place during the Det's transit to WESTPAC. There was no time during these exercises dedicated to night landing practice. No night flying was accomplished during COMTUEX 1-77 and 1.7 night hours and 1 night landing was recorded during RIMPAC 77.

Findings of Facts: 41, 42, 43, 44, 49

all B6

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8. A major reason for Det ONE's lack of training flights and pilot proficiency/qualifications can be attributed to the fact that their assigned aircraft was not available through the critical period of their pre-deployment preparations. Through January and February 1977 only 4 training flights are recorded by Det pilots in substitute aircraft.

Findings of Facts: 37, 38, 39, 40

9. LCDR SMITH possessed the background and experience necessary to meet the qualifications for a detachment OinC. However, after his assignment as OinC, he did not properly discharge his responsibilities. He was negligent in the performance of his duty when:

a. He failed to ensure that he and the personnel in his detachment were properly trained.

b. He failed to recognize and take corrective action to eliminate the existing deficiencies.

c. He failed to bring the deficiencies to the attention of proper authority.

Findings of Facts: 7, 17, 22, 27, 28, 36, 42, 44, 49, 50, 55, 56, 57, 60

10. Throughout the predeployment work-up phase, LCDR SMITH provided only limited leadership and guidance to personnel of his Det and did not forcefully seek to achieve completion of training requirements. His attitude toward the deployment vacillated and at times he exhibited to other Det members a lack of enthusiasm for the deployment and the ASW mission. Preoccupation with and anxiety over his contributed to his attitude and performance. LCDR SMITH's apprehension toward the cruise was not perceived by the CO or XO.

Findings of Facts: 52, 54, 55

11. The squadron depends primarily on 2 sources of information to monitor the Detachments training progress. These sources are the Det OinC and the Pre-Deployment Checkout Requirements (HSL-33 Inst. 3700.1A). Detachment training records are generally not reviewed or inspected by other squadron personnel. Utilizing these procedures, the squadron is almost totally dependent upon the Det OinC to recognize and report any deficiencies or problem areas. The Inspector conducting the COMASWINGPAC Detachment Readiness Evaluation also relies mainly on the OinC for information. If the Det OinC fails to bring attention to weaknesses, they may go unnoticed by the squadron or inspecting officer. In addition, the Pre-Deployment Checkout is not a good source to utilize for measuring Det progress since there are many requirements, such as shipboard landing qualifications, which are not included.

Findings of Facts: 50, 56

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12. The capabilities and the level of readiness in ASW tactics and maintenance was degraded because of the failure of personnel to complete required ground training courses prior to deployment.

Findings of Facts: 27, 28, 31, 36

13. Among the officers, the experience level and training in aircraft maintenance procedures was extremely limited. LCDR SMITH previously served as Assistant Maintenance Officer but the other officers have had billets outside the Maintenance Department. LT ~~SW~~ received only moderate training just prior to deployment in order to prepare him for a PMQA designation.

Findings of Facts: 7, 8, 9, 19, 26

14. ~~CONDUCTORS~~

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Findings of Facts: 23, 24, 25

15. The training records of the pilots and aircrew lack standardization and in several instances, provided conflicting or inaccurate information. Also information in the Pre-Deployment Checklist did not always concur with that contained in the training jackets.

Findings of Facts: 18, 23, 24, 28, 29, 36

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. ~~Proposed~~ t.

BS + B6

Opinions: 4, 5, 6

2. ~~Proposed~~

BS + B6

Opinions: 4, 5, 6, 12

3. ~~Proposed~~

BS + B6

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B51 B30

Opinions: 4, 5, 6, 12

4. It is recommended that Detachments be established in sufficient time to ensure that all training requirements and qualifications are attained no later than 30 days prior to deployment.

Opinions: 1, 2

5. It is recommended that HSL-33 incorporate a more effective procedure for maintaining closer monitoring of detachment training from within the parent command so that timely identification of weaknesses can be made and corrective measures taken.

Opinion: 11

6. It is recommended that HSL-33 promulgate procedures which will ensure that detachments undergoing pre-deployment training are provided with a substitute aircraft if their own aircraft is in a non-flying status.

Opinion: 8

7. It is recommended that COMASWINGPAC continue the efforts to obtain dedicated deck time for day and night shipboard landing proficiency and qualification.

Opinions: 4, 7

8. It is recommended that COMASWINGPAC establish more stringent requirements for the Detachment Readiness Evaluation and that this inspection be conducted no later than 30 days prior to deployment. It is further recommended that a written report be submitted by the inspecting officer on the results of the evaluation.

Opinion: 11

9. It is recommended that HSL-33 rewrite the Pre-Deployment Checkout Requirements (HSL-33 Inst. 3700.1A) to include items such as shipboard landing qualifications/currency and other pertinent flight data. More specific guidance should be given as to who should sign off completed items and what information is to be entered in each section.

Opinion: 11

10. It is recommended that HSL-33 conduct a complete review/update of all pilot and aircrewmen training jackets to ensure standardization, accuracy and currency of information contained therein.

Opinion: 15

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11.

BS

Opinion: 14

12. It is recommended that HSL-33 make every attempt to assign at least one officer to each detachment who possesses a thorough knowledge and understanding of the aircraft maintenance organization as well as the SH-2F systems.

Opinion: 13

" B6 "

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

COMMANDER
ANTI-SUBMARINE WARFARE WING
U.S. PACIFIC FLEET
NAVAL AIR STATION, NORTH ISLAND
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92135

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ (unclassified upon removal of enclosures (3) and (72))

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FF7-11/011:PMG:at
5800
Ser: C-41
28 June 1977

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on CDR *BP*, USN, ltr of 25 May 1977

From: Commander Anti-Submarine Warfare Wing, U. S. Pacific Fleet
To: Judge Advocate General
Via: Commander Naval Air Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet

Subj: Investigation to inquire into the circumstances connected with the aircraft mishap of 11 March 1977 involving aircraft SH-2F BUNO 150142, embarked in USS STERETT with HSL-33, DET ONE, which resulted in the death of LCDR Jeffrey F. SMITH, U. S. Navy

Ref: (c) Telcon between CDR *Bl* (COMASWWINGPAC) and CDR *Bl* (OP591) of 17 June 1977

Encl: (91) COMASWWINGPAC msg 312057Z Mar 1977
(92) Attachment 1, COMASWWINGPACINST 3710.17
(93) COMNAVAIRPAC msg 262215Z May 1977

1. Readdressed and forwarded.
2. The Preliminary Statement and Findings of Fact are approved.
3. The Opinions are approved with the following exceptions:
 - (a.) Opinion 14 is disapproved.

BS

4. The recommendations are approved with the following comments and exceptions:

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a. Recommendations 1 and 2 are amended as follows: Hearings in accordance with Article 15, UCMJ, will be held to determine the extent, if any, of dereliction of duty on the part of Commander Mosser and Lieutenant Commander Mahoney in conjunction with this accident. Commander Naval Air Force, U. S. Pacific Fleet, will be notified of the results of the hearings. *BS*

b. Recommendation 3 is disapproved.

BS/B6

c. Direction to implement Recommendations 4, 5, 6, 9, 10 and 12 has been forwarded by separate letter to Commanding Officer, Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron Light THIRTY-THREE, for action.

d. Recommendation *(7)*: As set forth in enclosure (91) this Command has requested that Commander Third Fleet schedule six hours per week (three day and three night) of small deck ship time for helicopter CQ and HIFR. Third and fourth quarter Fiscal Year 1977 schedules reflect this requirement, and currently all necessary helicopter pilot qualifications are being accomplished. In addition, minimum pre-deployment pilot proficiency standards have been addressed in Attachment 1 to COMASWINGPACINST 3710.17 of 9 June 1977, enclosure (92). These requirements are considerably more stringent than those in the SH-2F NATOPS and will ensure full qualification and proficiency prior to future detachments. This subject will also be covered in detail in a joint COMNAVAIRPAC/COMNAVSURFPAC instruction currently being written on the subject of "Helicopter Detachment Training, Workup and Proficiency Standards," as indicated by enclosure (93).

e. Recommendation *(8)*: Upon completion of the joint instruction, COMASWINGPACINST C3500.16 will be revised to ensure that all Detachment Readiness Evaluations will be conducted no later than 30 days prior to deployment, will include review of pilot logbooks, and will conclude with a written report.

f. Recommendation *(11)* is disapproved,

BS

B6