



Cpl. Kristin Gambrell

H-53 Maintenance Simplified

The Integrated Mechanical Diagnostic System (IMDS) for the CH-53E Sea Stallion completed operational evaluation and was declared operationally effective and suitable. Integrated with the onboard systems and mission computer, the IMDS provides full-time diagnostic monitoring of the helo's mechanical drive train. Data recorded during a flight can be downloaded onto a computer to highlight items that need maintenance attention. The IMDS streamlines maintenance functions that previously required separate test equipment, manual data collection, and labor-intensive maintenance troubleshooting. The system has entered low-rate initial production and is being installed on H-53s of Marine Helicopter Training Squadron 302 at MCAS New River, N.C. The system is also being considered for other helos such as the MH-60 and the H-1.

Advanced Arresting Gear Underway

General Atomics has received a \$95.8 million contract for system development and demonstration of a shipboard-representative Advanced Arresting Gear (AAG). The system will be installed at Naval Air Systems Command facilities in Lakehurst, N.J., beginning in 2006, and testing with unmanned test vehicles is expected to begin in 2007. Land-based aircraft testing is slated for 2009, and initial shipboard operations expected by 2014. The AAG will be retrofitted into existing Nimitz-class aircraft carriers and installed in follow-on types as they are built. Designed to meet the needs of Navy air wings through 2045, the AAG will be able to recover heavier and faster aircraft as well as unmanned aerial vehicles that may enter the fleet in the future.

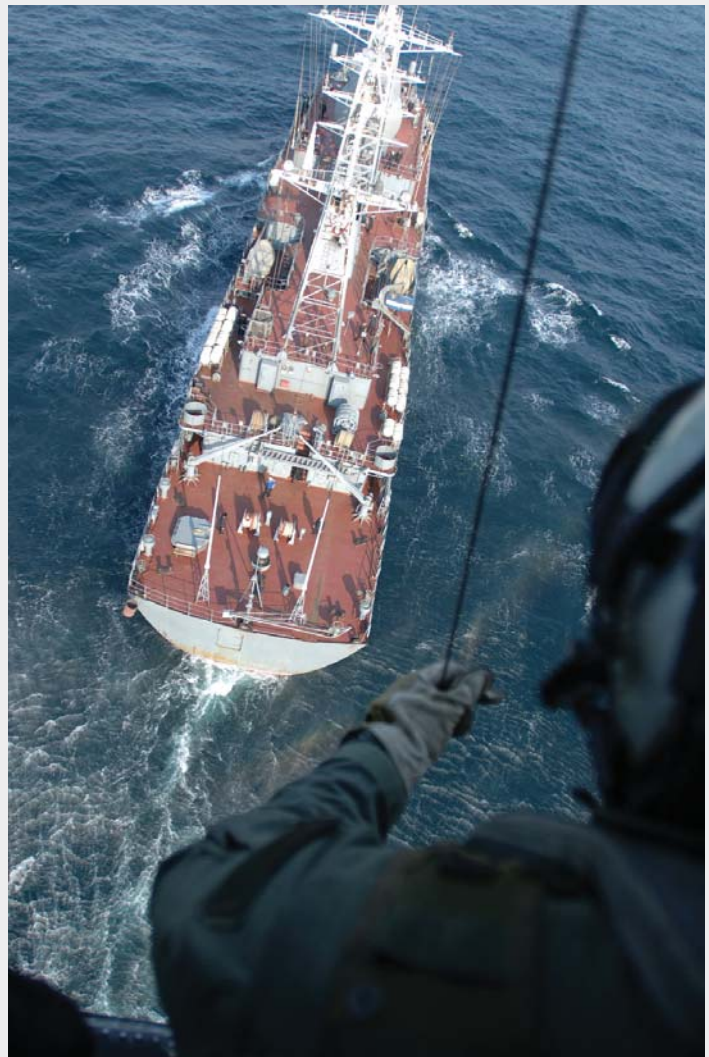
Vietnam Pilot Returns Home

The remains of a Naval Aviator missing in action from the Vietnam War have been returned home for burial. On 6 April 1972, Cdr. Thomas E. Dunlop was flying an A-7E Corsair II from *Coral Sea* (CVB 43) on a bombing mission in North Vietnam when he was shot down by a surface to air missile. A crash site excavated in 2003 and 2004 by the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command located remains that were later identified to be Dunlop's.

For the Record

The Naval Research Laboratory's Flight Support detachment at NAS Patuxent River, Md., was redesignated **Scientific Development Squadron (VXS) 1** on 13 December 2004.

The Marine Corps **KC-130J** passed its second operational evaluation in preparation for the tanker's first operational deployment.



PH2 William H. Ramsey

Facing page, a CH-53E of Marine Helicopter Training Squadron 302 lifts an armored personnel carrier at Camp LeJeune, N.C. HMT-302 conducted operational evaluation of the Integrated Mechanical Diagnostic System, which will soon be installed in CH-53s throughout the Marine Corps. Above, an aircrew member of Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron 14 lowers memorabilia to the Russian AGI *Kurily* (CCB 208) on 20 March, after the Russian ship changed course to allow *Kitty Hawk's* (CV 63) Carrier Air Wing 5 to conduct air operations.

The Naval Air Systems Command announced that the follow-on to the E-2C Hawkeye 2000 will be designated the **E-2D Advanced Hawkeye**. The E-2D is expected to reach initial operating capability in 2011.

The final keel section of *George H. W. Bush* (CVN 77) was lowered into place on 8 March at Northrop Grumman Newport News, Va.

The **H-1 upgrade program** passed 2,500 mishap-free flight test hours.

Mishaps

On 22 March a T-45C Goshawk of Training Squadron 7 crashed at NAS Meridian, Miss., with one fatality.

An F/A-18F Super Hornet of Strike Fighter Squadron 122 suffered Class A damage during landing at NAS Fallon, Nev. When the port mainmount failed to extend, the pilot safely executed an arrested landing.

An MH-53E Sea Dragon of Helicopter Combat Support Squadron 4 was destroyed, but there were no fatalities, following a crash at NAS Sigonella, Italy, on 16 February.



PHAN Elisabeth Ann Saccotelli

An F/A-18F Super Hornet of Strike Fighter Squadron 41 drops a payload delivery unit filled with leaflets during a training exercise off *Nimitz* (CVN 68) on 18 March.

On 29 January, the aircrew of an F/A-18F Super Hornet of Strike Fighter Squadron 102 ejected safely when the aircraft departed the flight deck on *Kitty Hawk* (CV 63). Several people on the flight deck were injured.



LCpl. Andrew Pendracki

A Marine All Weather Fighter Attack Squadron 224 F/A-18D Hornet catches the wire of the expeditionary arresting gear at Al Asad, Iraq, on 26 March. Expeditionary airfield technician Sgt. James S. Happle runs to check that both sides of the gear are functioning properly.



PHAN Kristopher Wilson

An aviation warfare systems operator of Helicopter Antisubmarine Squadron 7 observes as his SH-60F Seahawk approaches the flight deck of Harry S. Truman (CVN 75) on 19 March.

Reducing Mishaps—The Safety Challenge

Until about 10 years ago, aviation mishap rates had declined dramatically as improvements in training, aircraft, and procedures were introduced. While we continue our efforts to reduce mishaps, we know we can do better. Almost 90 percent of aviation mishaps are the result of some form of human error, and in many cases, mishaps can be prevented.

The Naval Safety Center offers many resources for mishap prevention. Visit their aviation directorate website, www.safetycenter.navy.mil/aviation.

This URL will link you to the Center's aeromedical, aviation data, investigations, operations, maintenance, and bird/animal strike hazard divisions, as well as to safety surveys, culture workshops, and more.