



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY
HELICOPTER MINE COUNTERMEASURES SQUADRON 15
9020 OCEAN DRIVE
CORPUS CHRISTI, TX 78419-5000

1999 ✓

5750
Ser 00 466

04 FEB 2000


From: Commanding Officer, Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron 15
To: Naval Aviation History Branch, Washington Navy Yard

Subj: COMMAND HISTORY

Ref: (a) OPNAVINST 5750.12F

Encl: (1) Command Composition and Organization
(2) Chronology
(3) Narrative
(4) Supporting Documents

1. Per reference (a), enclosures (1) through (4) are submitted.


R. D. HOWELL

COMMAND COMPOSITION AND ORGANIZATION

MISSION: HM-15's mission is to provide a 72-hour rapid response airborne mine countermeasures (AMCM) capability worldwide in support of Joint Chiefs of Staff operational tasking. The Bureau of Aeronautics initiated the concept of AMCM in 1951. The Navy MH-53E Sea Dragon helicopter is the latest version of the Sikorsky H-53 helicopter series configured specifically for AMCM. Numerous mine sweeping/hunting systems enable HM-15 to neutralize and/or locate contact, magnetic, acoustic, and combination influence mines.

COMMANDING OFFICER: CDR R. D. Howell, USNR, assumed command of HM-15 in December 1998. (See supporting documents)

PERMANENT DUTY STATION: HM-15 is homeported at NAS Corpus Christi, Texas.

TYPE AND NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT: HM-15 currently has 11 MH-53E helicopters assigned to them.

Side Number	Buno Number
00	164861
01	164792
02	164772
03	164770
04	164768
05	164766
06	164764
07	162507
11	163513
12	162508
13	162510

CHRONOLOGY 1999

19-25 Jan	Deployed on USS Inchon for GOMEX 99-1/Deployment Work-Ups
01 Mar-28 Jul	Deployed on USS Inchon for INCTASKGRU 99-1/OPERATION SHINING HOPE
20 Apr	Received seventh consecutive Class "A" flight mishap free award
04-18 Jun	Deployed on USS Kearsarge for OPERATION JOINT GUARDIAN
20-27 Sep	Participated in GOMEX 99-2/MIREM 9 in the Corpus Christi OPAREA
13 Oct	Received CNO's Annual Aviation Safety Award
24 Oct-07 Nov	Detached to Coastal Systems Station, Panama City for MK-105 training during HAWKEX 00-1
01-04 Dec	Participated in HAWKEX 00-2 in the Corpus Christi OPAREA for AN/AQS-14A Training

NARRATIVE 1999

The Blackhawks of HM-15 began the year with preparations to embark aboard USS Inchon (MCS-12) in support of Inchon Task Group 99, a combined Mine Countermeasures exercise involving 6th Fleet and 5th Fleet areas of responsibility. Following a departure in March, the squadron conducted multiple workups during the Trans Atlantic crossing but was unexpectedly diverted to provide assistance to Kosovar refugees in Albania in support of OPERATION SHINING HOPE. During this effort the squadron flew 770 hours, transported 5888 personal, and lifted 765,000 lbs. of mail and cargo.

In April, while deployed, the squadron received a seventh consecutive Class "A" Mishap Free Flight award for having flown 24,955 without a major accident. In June, a two aircraft detachment crossdecked from USS Inchon to USS Kearsarge (LHD-3) to provide further peace keeping assistance in Kosovo during OPERATON JOINT GUARDIAN. HM-15 returned safely to Corpus Christi in July.

Within a month of returning from deployment, the squadron rapidly turned around to participate in exercise GOMEX 99-2 / MIREM 9, a joint mine countermeasures exercise consisting of elements of HM-15 in addition to mine hunting/sweeping ships from Naval Station Ingleside, TX. In October, the squadron received the CNO Annual Aviation Safety Award in recognition of an exemplary safety record.

From 24 October to 07 November, HM-15 detached four aircraft to Coastal Systems Station Panama City, Florida to conduct extensive MK-105 Magnetic Influence Mine Sweep training. The Blackhawk Detachment flew over 145 hours maintaining fleet readiness. The squadron ended the year with HAWKEX 00-2 which consisted of a local training exercise in the Corpus Christi Oparea emphasizing AN/AQS-14A mine hunting sonar training.

In recognition of operational excellence and outstanding safety awareness, the squadron has earned the Battle "E", the Navy Unit Commendation and has earned a place on the CINCLANTFLT honor roll for retention excellence.



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Ser 20/ 427

05 JAN 2000


From: Commanding Officer, Helicopter Mine Countermeasures Squadron 15
To: Commander, Helicopter Tactical Wing, U.S. Atlantic Fleet (Code 00)

Subj: BATTLE "E" AND CNO ANNUAL AVIATION SAFETY AWARD

Ref: (a) COMNAVAIRLANTINST 1650.3E
(b) COMHELTACWINGLANT 061631Z DEC 99

Encl: (1) Battle "E" and CNO Safety Award Submission

1. Per references (a) and (b), enclosure (1) is submitted.


R. D. HOWELL



1. Operational Achievements

A. Flight hours:	3,822.4										
(1) Total Hours Flown Ashore:	2,129.4										
(a) Day (Hours/Percent):	1,928.4 / 90.6%										
(b) Night (Hours/Percent):	201 / 9.4%										
(c) Primary Missions (Hours/Percent):	1,625.1 / 76.3%										
(2) Total Sorties Ashore:	779										
(a) Day:	647										
(b) Night:	132										
(3) Total Embarked Hours:	1,693										
(a) Day (Hours/Percent of Total Hours/Percent of Embarked Hours):	1,552.5 / 40.6% / 91.7%										
(b) Night (Hours/Percent of Total Hours/Percent of Embarked Hours):	140.5 / 3.7% / 8.3%										
(4) Total Sorties Embarked:	560										
(a) Day:	510										
(b) Night:	50										
(5) Utilization Rate Per Month/Average for CY99:											
<u>JAN</u>	<u>FEB</u>	<u>MAR</u>	<u>APR</u>	<u>MAY</u>	<u>JUN</u>	<u>JUL</u>	<u>AUG</u>	<u>SEP</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>
28.8	18.1	29.6	30.0	34.2	29.9	22.4	24.6	27.3	32.6	32.8	20.9

Average Aircraft Utilization Rate for CY99: 27.6

B. Shipboard Landings:	
(1) Large Deck (Multi-Spot) Landings:	1,851
(a) Day:	1,566
(b) Night:	285
(2) Small Deck (Single-Spot) Landings:	0
(a) Day:	0
(b) Night:	0



- C. Rescues: 0
- (1) Day: 0
- (2) Night: 0

D. Deployments:

- (1) Ship: USS INCHON
Location and Dates: Mediterranean/Adriatic Sea (1 March-28 July 1999)
Detachment: INCTASKGRU 99-1/OPERATION SHINING HOPE
Days deployed: 150
Aircraft Deployed: 10 (6 HM-15/ 4 HM-14)
- (2) Ship: USS KEARSARGE
Location and Dates: Aegean Sea (4-18 June 1999)
Detachment: OPERATION JOINT GUARDIAN
Days deployed: 14
Aircraft Deployed: 2

2. Training Readiness

A. Major Exercises/Special Exercises:

- (1) GOMEX 99-1/Deployment Work-Ups (USS INCHON)
Location and Dates: Corpus Christi OPAREA (19-25 January 1999)
Days embarked: 4
Number of Aircraft: 7
- (2) GOMEX 99-2/MIREM 9
Location and Dates: Corpus Christi OPAREA (20-27 September 1999)
- (3) HAWKEX 00-1(MK-105 Training)
Location and Dates: COASTAL SYSTEMS STATION- Panama City, FL (24 October-7 November 1999)
- (4) HAWKEX 00-2 (AN/AQS-14 Training)
Location and Dates: Corpus Christi OPAREA (1-4 December 1999)

B. N/A

C. HM

(1) AMCM

- (a) AMCM Time/Percent of Total Hours: 680.2 / 18.2%
- (b) AMCM Time Ashore/Percent of Total AMCM Time: 434.6 / 63.9%
- (c) AMCM Time Embarked/Percent of Total AMCM Time: 245.6 / 36.1%



(2) Tow

(A) Tow Time/Percent of AMCM Time: 471.1 / 45.8%

(B) Tow Time Ashore/Percent of Total Tow Time: 326.3/69.3%

(C) Tow Time Embarked/Percent of Total Tow Time: 144.8/30.7%

(3) Logistics

(A) Ship Replenishment

- VOD Hours/Percent of Total Hours: 944.9/25.3%

- VOD Hours Shore-based/Percent of Total VOD Hours: 70.3/10.5%

- VOD Hours Embarked/Percent of Total VOD Hours: 874.6/89.5%

(B) Utility Hours/Percent of Total Hours: 0/0%

(C) Number of Passengers/Pounds Cargo/Pounds Mail/Pounds Outsized Cargo:

-Passengers transported: 6,978

-Pounds cargo moved: 1,018,973

-Pounds mail moved: 40,802

-Pounds outsized cargo moved: 152,500

3. Weapons System Readiness

A. Aircraft Material Readiness

MONTH	%FMC	%MC	%NMCM	%NMCS
JAN	52.1	62.5	22.6	14.9
FEB	63.7	67.7	21.7	10.6
MAR	58.4	69.3	23.2	7.6
APR	58.5	71.0	20.4	8.6
MAY	63.2	67.7	20.1	12.3
JUN	48.9	58.6	26.6	14.8
JUL	52.3	68.4	25.0	6.6
AUG	60.3	70.3	17.7	12.0
SEP	44.6	56.7	24.7	18.6
OCT	47.6	64.9	25.7	9.4
NOV	42.1	53.4	29.9	16.7
DEC	63.5	64.2	20.3	15.5



- B. Cannibalization Rate per 100 Flight Hours: 10.7
- C. Squadron "I" Level A-799 rate per 100 Removals for Cause: 0
- D. Aircraft Material Readiness Reporting (SCIR) Accuracy: 98.6
- E. Number of FOD occurrences: 1

4. Personnel Readiness

A. Retention Rate (Gross Percentage):

PERIOD:	ELIGIBLE	NOT ELIGIBLE	# RE-ENLISTED	GROSS %
FIRST TERM	56	22	27	35
SECOND TERM	11	2	10	77
CAREER	50	4	45	83

B. Advancement:

(1) MAR 99 Exam (cycle 163)

RATE	ELIGIBLE	ADVANCED	PNA
E-4	57	27	26
E-5	80	20	57
E-6	71	14	48

(2) SEP 99 Exam (cycle 164)

RATE	ELIGIBLE	ADVANCED	PNA
E-4	62	39	20
E-5	75	21	53
E-6	64	6	56

5. Combat Inspections

A. Inspection Results:

- (1) Material Conditions Inspection: SAT
- (2) NATOPS Assist Visit: SAT
- (3) SAR Evaluation: N/A

6. Achievements in Aviation Safety

- A. Alpha F/FR/AG Mishaps: None



- B. Bravo F/FR/AG Mishaps: None
- C. Charlie F/FR/AG Mishaps: 26 Sept 99, AGM 01-99, Aircraft main rotor blades struck a parked B2 stand causing damage to all seven tip caps.
- D. Aviation Fatalities: None
- E. Personnel Lost Work days: 32
- F. Deployment Safety:

(1) Shipboard Deployments:

- (a) Ship: USS INCHON (MCS-12)
 Location and Dates: Corpus Christi OPAREA (19-25 January 1999)
 Detachment: GOMEX 99-1/Deployment Work-Ups
 Days deployed: 4
 Number of Aircraft: 7

Category	Amount
Flight Hours	54.4
Passengers Transported	315
Tow Hours	46.3
Night Hours	4.8

- (b) Ship: USS INCHON (MCS-12)
 Location and Dates: Mediterranean Sea (1 March-28 July 1999)
 Detachment: INCTASKGRU 99-1/OPERATION SHINING HOPE
 Days deployed: 150
 Aircraft Deployed: 10 (6 HM-15/ 4 HM-14)

Category	Amount
Flight Hours	1,537.1
Passengers Transported	5,888
Mail Transported (lbs.)	2,402
Cargo Transported (lbs.)	762,373
Tow Hours	214.5
Night hours	60.2

- (c) Ship: USS KEARSARGE (LHD-3)
 Location and Dates: Aegean Sea (4-18 June 1999)
 Detachment: OPERATION JOINT GUARDIAN
 Days deployed: 14
 Aircraft Deployed: 2

Category	Amount
Flight Hours	101.5
Passengers Transported	446
Mail Transported (lbs.)	38,400
Cargo Transported	256,600



(2) Land Based Deployments:

- (a) Coastal System Station- Panama City, FL
Location and Dates: CSS Panama City, FL (24 October-7 November 1999)
Detachment: HAWKEX 00-1(MK-105 Training)
Day detached: 22
Number of Aircraft: 4

Category	Amount
Flight Hours	146.1
Tow Hours	72.9

- G. Hazard Reports Submitted: 5
H. NATOPS changes submitted: 20
I. Safety Articles: None

J. Maintenance Safety: 65 Hazardous Material Reports (HMR's), Technical Publication Deficiency Reports (TPDR's) and Quality Deficiency Reports (QDR's) were submitted in the last year. Those covering Safety aspects are listed below:

(1) HMR 99-0018, Upon recovery from an autorotation, when collective was pulled a loud bang was heard and a shudder was felt throughout the airframe, followed by a rise in torque and NF.

(2) HMR 99-0024, Visual inspection of the right hand inboard wheel assembly revealed a five-inch crack running circumferentially along the bead ledge of the inboard wheel half.

(3) HMR/TFOA 99-0025, Anti-collision light found missing while performing a daily inspection. Visual inspection revealed torn metal at the flange of the light housing indicating the clamp and the red and white light assemblies were torn from the housing during flight.

(4) HMR 99-0033, Raised metal was found on number 7 sleeve and spindle pitch horn at the inboard top horn bolt attachment lug. The paint was removed for further inspection and subsequently revealed visual cracks extending from the raised metal area.

(5) HMR/TFOA 99-D007, Main rotor fairing found missing upon shutdown at NAS Corpus Christi. Visual inspection revealed all connecting hardware (main rotor fairing screws) intact.

(6) HMR 99-D022, During aircraft tum-up for functional flight, number 1 nose gearbox chip light illuminated. Found numerous chips in chip detector and filter. AFC 440 REV A had recently been incorporated 7.5 flight hours before this failure.

(7) QDR (CAT 1) 99-D004, During a flight control inspection of the forward and aft cyclic input bellcrank, excessive play was discovered about the bearing axis. Further inspection utilizing a dial indicator revealed bellcrank lateral play at over .185. Lateral play limited to .080 by maintenance instruction manuals.



(8) QDR (CAT 1) 99-D003, Engine start manifold was installed 9154 day and subsequently flown 1.2 flight hours. During pre-flight the following morning, the manifold was observed to be statically leaking at over 160 drops per minute. MIMS limit set at 1 drop per day.

(9) QDR (CAT 1) 99-D021, The alignment holes in the pitch change beam spacer for the MH-53E were found to be manufactured incorrectly.

(10) QDR (CAT 1) 99-0013, During start sequence fuel was introduced at 21% NG. Fuel flow immediately read 400 PPH and resulted in aborted start attempts due to excessive T-5 temp.

(11) TPDR (CAT1) 99-D008, No warning exists to prevent personnel from inadvertently removing the safety lock nut from the ram of a 25 ton aircraft jack.

(12) TPDR (CAT1) 99-0031, Confusion in manual (lack of detail in drawing) allows technicians to install the walking beam backwards. The walking beam should have the beveled side installed facing aft.

K. Safety Standdowns:

(1) 11 Jan 99 Back In the Saddle Safety Standdown held at the Base Auditorium. Topics included fire prevention, hearing and sight conservation, and general shipboard and flight deck safety.

(2) 4 April 99 onboard USS INCHON. Topics included Land Survival, Hazards associated with flying over a featureless terrain, high temp/ high density altitude flight characteristics, and heat stress prevention.

(3) 3 Sep 99 Post Deployment Safety held at Cine 6 Theaters. Topics included traffic safety, maintenance malpractice, HAZCOM, hurricane preparedness and CMEO.

(4) 10 Dec 99 Holiday Safety held at NAS CC Wings Auditorium. Topics included fire safety, holiday traffic safety, DUI/DAPA brief, anthrax brief, holiday food safety and suicide prevention.

L. Safety Surveys:

(1) Aviation Safety Survey. A voluntary inspection of the squadron was requested. Inspection team was unable to fit HM-15 into their schedule.

(2) Industrial Hygiene survey conducted by NAVHOSP CC IH 20-22 Oct 99

M. Safety Awards (Class A Mishap Free Years): HM-15 achieved its seventh consecutive Class "A" flight mishap free award on 20 April 1999. The squadron has flown 24,955 Class "A" mishap free hours to date.

N. Safety Pro Awards:

(1) On 16 November 1998, AN [REDACTED] discovered the #1 engine outboard cowling improperly latched and a loose bolt on the tail rotor disconnect cowling.

(2) On 29 December 1998, ASAN [REDACTED] while performing daily inspection, discovered two damper bearings installed backwards on the main rotor head.



(3) On 08 January 1999, AT2 [REDACTED] immediately took charge of a fuel leak on aircraft Hurricane 13 during the defueling process. Directed personnel in the containment of the spill, and clean up operation.

(4) On 12 January 1999, AMS2 [REDACTED] while inspecting Utility 1 Hydraulic System on Hurricane 01, discovered a hydraulic line rubbing against the Accessory Gear Box driveshaft.

(5) On 23 January 1999, AN [REDACTED] discovered an engine nacelle panel fastener on the #1 engine unsecured.

(6) On 19 April 1999, AD3 [REDACTED] while performing a routine collateral duty inspection on Hurricane 01, noticed an unusual object lying on the starboard fuel sponson. Further inspection revealed damage to one of the main rotor blades.

(7) On 26 July 1999, AT2 (AW/NAC) [REDACTED] discovered the collective output rod from the collective stick to the lower automatic flight control system bell crank missing. Upon further inspection, it was noticed the jam nut for the adjustable rod end had backed off and the torque seal was broken.

(8) On 16 September 1999, AD2 (NAC) [REDACTED], found the thomas coupling to the number 1 input drive shaft improperly shimmed.

(9) On 22 September 1999, AD1 (AW) [REDACTED] discovered a washer in the #3 engine nacelle, during further investigation, it was discovered that the washer was part of the #3 Nose Gear Box (NGB) tension pulley and a loose bolt.

(10) On 24 September 1999, AE3 [REDACTED], while trouble shooting the number 2 engine fire light, discovered a defective fire warning system which was disabling the engine fire light.

(11) On 04 December 1999, AS1 (AW) [REDACTED], discovered a bolt broken on the port main mount wheel.

(12) On 08 December 1999, AMSAA [REDACTED] while performing a turnaround inspection, found a fuel leak in the Auxiliary Power Plant compartment. During further investigation, a broken fuel injector was discovered.

O. Qualifications:

Pilot		Aircrew	
Qualification	Total	Qualification	Total
AHAC	8	AMCM First Crew	12
HAC	7	AMCM Second Crew	25
H2P	7	Utility Crew	40
FCF	6	FCF	10
NI/ANI	6	NI/ANI	6



Aircrew on board:

Pilots assigned		Aircrew assigned	
ACTIVE	31	ACTIVE	87
SELRES	7	SELRES	3
Total	38	Total	90

P. Mission Accomplishment:

(1) **Airfield Improvements:** Safety Department recommended numerous safety improvements to the Shining Hope Airfield Commander at Tirana/Rinas Airfield in Albania, to improve the efficiency and safety of flight line operations. These improvements resulted in zero injuries and accidents in the high tempo operations with numerous helicopters from different countries.

(2) **Leave Risk Assessment Form:** Utilizing concepts of ORM, Squadron has continued the Individual Risk Assessment Form, which is attached to all Leave requests. This form is used to help individuals and their supervisors identify potential risks associated with leave and provide a forum for the individual and supervisor to develop a hazard abatement plan. Since implementation of this form there have been no leave-related alcohol, personal injury or motor vehicle incidents.

(3) **Proactive Safety Council:** The Officer Safety Council and Enlisted Safety Committee have worked together to identify and eliminate numerous hazards at NAS Corpus Christi, TX. The minutes for each month's meetings include an up-to-date list of all of the command's motorcycles riders. Working together, the Council and Committee have developed and implemented a decision tree to improve the efficiency of hot pitting and hot seating squadron aircraft on board NAS Corpus Christi.

(4) **Flight Schedule Risk assessment:** HM-15 has proactively incorporated ORM into the daily flight schedule and Squadron Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). All squadron missions have been assigned risk assessment codes (A through D) and are published in the daily flight schedule. Pilot and Aircrew proficiency and currency is also factored into the assignment of risk assessment codes. Any flight assigned a risk code C or higher must be approved by the Commanding Officer. An ORM worksheet is required for every flight in accordance with HM-15 SOP.

(5) **Detachment Hazard Abatement Addendum:** For each squadron detachment, an ORM based Safety plan is developed and attached to the detachment letter of instruction. This documentation of potential hazards for each detachment area and weapons systems employed to ensure all hands are aware of the potential risks involved in the new operating environment and what they can do to minimize their risk of injury or damage to material assets.

(6) **Bar Coded NATOPS:** To improve accountability of Naval Air Training and Operating Procedures and Standardization (NATOPS) publications, the command utilized bar coding technologies to inventory all NATOPS publications issued to aircrew.

Q. TFOAs:

(1) **HMR/TFOA 99-0025:** Anti-collision light found missing while performing a daily inspection. Visual inspection revealed torn metal at the flange of the light housing indicating the clamp and the red and white light assemblies were torn from the housing during flight.



(2) HMR/TFOA 99-D007: Main rotor fairing found missing upon shutdown at NAS Corpus Christi. Visual inspection revealed all connecting hardware (main rotor fairing screws) intact.

7. General Contributions to Individual Community

Calendar year 1999 was divided into three distinct phases. The pre-deployment, deployment and post-deployment phases enabled the squadron to take a hard look at how the HM community trains, deploys and prepares the squadron for future deployments.

Pre-deployment. The pre-deployment phase consisted of normal flight and AMCM mission training with an emphasis on shipboard operations. GOMEX 99-1 was a training exercise specifically designed to provide important work-up training with other deploying units, day and night DLQ qualifications and exercise the load out plan for the Inchon Task Group Deployment. Pre-deployment flight requirements and milestones, as established by COMNAVSURFLANT, were not completed due to limited ship availability and poor weather conditions. As a consequence, the completion of work-ups actually took place during the TRANSLANT portion of the deployment. Berthing and work space issues were also resolved prior to the deployment and all identified deficiencies were rectified through aggressive liaison with all embarked units, staff and ship's company representatives.

Deployment. The highly successful deployment started with the integration of four aircraft and a small detachment of personnel from HM-14. These aircraft were originally assigned to allow for a lift of opportunity to the 5th Fleet AOR, but were retasked to remain with HM-15 on INCHON until the commencement of our return transit. These aircraft were maintained and operated primarily by HM-15 personnel as directed by Commander, Helicopter Tactical Wing Atlantic. During the Trans-Atlantic crossing DLQ, CCA and ongoing AMCM mission training ensured all deployed crews were current and proficient for any potential missions. AMCM training and readiness remained at peak levels even while continuing the completion of the work-up requirements. Deficiencies in the training curriculum of pilots and aircrew were identified. During this period HM-15 also rewrote the squadron's ROC & POE to address and identify the manning issues associated with the upcoming reduction in the number of assigned NAVRESFOR aircraft.

HM-15 was scheduled to participate in two mine countermeasures exercises during the deployment. Due to our ordered participation in Joint Task Force Shining Hope, we refocused our assets and preparations to one of our secondary mission areas, specifically logistics to provide humanitarian support. The squadron representatives did participate in the ALCUDRA and ARABIAN GAUNTLET exercise meetings and planning conferences, providing training to the exercise participants at the tasking of the COMCMRON TWO, the Operational Commander of the Task Group. The cancellation of these exercises greatly reduced the opportunity to conduct AMCM operations and potentially could have degraded our training and readiness. To prevent this, we conducted numerous AMCM training missions while simultaneously supporting logistics tasking from the Commander Joint Task Force Shining Hope.

Operation Shining Hope missions included humanitarian assistance (HA) flights in support of the Kosovar refugees in numerous Albanian refugee camps; providing transportation for numerous Flag Officers, engineers and civil affairs personnel to survey roads and locate prospective refugee camp-sites; transporting Construction Battalion Unit (CBU) equipment used to repair and build roads in and around the refugee camp at Kukes; and back-loading 26MEU(SOC) personnel and equipment aboard USS Kearsarge (LHD-3).

HM-15 cross-decked a two aircraft detachment from the USS Inchon to the USS Kearsarge for two weeks. During this time period they transited to the Aegean Sea to support Operation Joint Guardian. Their successful completion of all tasking ensured that the NATO peacekeeping force arrived in Kosovo on time and with all the required support equipment. Specifically, the detachment assisted in the movement of the 26MEU(SOC) to their pre-stage area in Skopje, Macedonia and provided logistics support for the ARG by transporting passengers; mail and cargo to/from Thessaloniki, Greece.

Post-deployment. Following the deployment, HM-15 was challenged with maintaining readiness and proficiency with the loss of numerous experienced personnel and the arrival of students/trainees from the FRS and FRAMP. The large turnover in personnel highlighted the weaknesses in the current way we train. Many areas were duplicated with little return from the extra training. Revision of the squadron Training and



Readiness Matrix was identified as one area where the squadron could regain the efficiency that was needed in training a large group of new personnel. The MH-53E AMCM FLIGHT TRAINING PROGRAM (COMHELTACWINGLANTINST 3502.1B) used to train squadron pilots and aircrew was also updated to reflect the current HM community training requirements to support the current operational environment.

The squadron participated in one major exercise after the deployment. During GOMEX 99-2/MIREM 9, integrated mine countermeasures operations were conducted as well as validating tactics supporting amphibious operations. In addition, HM-15 supported all the objectives of the MIREM 9 exercise.

Summary. 1999 was an exceptional year for HM-15, whether measured by operational accomplishments, Safety innovations or inspection results. The diverse conditions under which we were employed allowed us to exercise not only our primary mission areas and also demonstrate the command's ability to excel at secondary mission areas as well. The experiences of the past year will benefit this squadron well into the future, but are also worthy of recognition now through awarding the Battle "E" and CNO Safety Award for 1999.

8. Arleigh Burke Award:

HM Squadron ROC/POE. The HM ROC & POE were totally rewritten to update the loss of two reserve aircraft from the squadron. Deployments from the last ten years were evaluated to place the correct emphasis on what the HM community has historically been tasked to perform. Those mission areas were then re-evaluated. This was the basis for the updating of the squadron Training and Readiness Matrix.

HM Squadron Training and Readiness Matrix. The Training and Readiness Matrix was written using the lessons of the recent past. The way we should train is now reflected in a draft T&R matrix, which has been validated by both squadrons. This document will allow the HM community the flexibility to truly be a multi-mission ready squadron.

CHTWL Flight Training Instruction. The Flight Training Manual is in the revision process. The areas identified in the ROC/POE and T&R Matrix have been applied to the CHTWL Training Manual. COMHELTACWINGLANT and HM-15 have taken the instruction and tried to give the HM squadrons the flexibility to effectively train under very different circumstances. The efficiencies gained through this revision will increase the productivity of the squadron's training program and decrease the inefficiencies of having one H-53E FRS with two fleet squadrons acting as the AMCM mission FRS's.

MIREM Support. HM-15 has actively supported the MIREM initiatives and continues to update the use of the AN/AQS-14A. Most recently the AQS-14A has been evaluated for effectiveness in the 10-foot depth and the 30-foot, 40-foot, 50-foot and 60-foot altitude modes. This will pay benefits in all future AQS-14 operations by providing valid measures of effectiveness. It will also provide an outstanding starting point for the design of a test and evaluation plan for the fleet implementation of the AQS-20.

AMCM Tactics Continuum. HM-15 continues to fully support the AMCM Tactics Continuum. This semi-annual conference provides a valuable forum for community tactics personnel to exchange ideas and explores more efficient ways of conducting AMCM. Representatives from the other MCM communities are now becoming involved in an effort to improve inter-operability. HM-15 personnel have provided numerous hours of training to those attending the conference.