

MARINE AIR BASE SQUADRON-13
Marine Aircraft Group-13
1st Marine Aircraft Wing, FMF
FPO San Francisco 96602

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From: Commanding Officer
To: Commanding Officer, Marine Aircraft Group-13 (Attn: S-3)
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1. In accordance with the provisions of reference (a), enclosure (1) is submitted.
2. This submission is unclassified.


R. D. REVIE

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SHORT AIRFIELD FOR TACTICAL SUPPORT ARTICLE

MABS-13 Has Important Role: Maintains Vital System For Jets

Marine Air Base Squadron (MABS-13) 13 at El Toro has an important role in the readiness posture of the Fleet Marine Force, Pacific by maintaining a vital launch and recovery system for jets.

El Toro is one of the three bases in the world where jet aircraft have the advantage of a launch and recovery system identical to a Short Airfield for Tactical Support (SATS).

A normal runway for jets must be about 10,000 feet in length but with this system a jet can take off and land on a strip only 2,400 feet long. This system was developed uniquely by the Marine Corps for use where a short "portable" air strip is needed. The U.S. Air Force is also using the SATS system now.

The Marine Corps can completely equip and set up a SATS in four to five days over a previously prepared area or firm surface such as an old road or flat clearing. This is, of

course, a valuable aid in a combat situation where air support is needed.

The SATS has arresting gear that can stop a 50,000 lb. jet, going 150 knots, in 750 feet. The launching equipment can help the jet (such as an F4 Phantom) take off in an equally short distance.

The arresting gear is a 1½" steel cable which is attached to a propeller like device that turns inside a drum filled with Glycol and water. As the jet touches down, it drops a hook which catches the steel cable. The cable pulls on this rotor in the tank which pulls against the liquid creating the friction that slows the plane to a stop.

The launching gear, simply stated, is a dolly powered by two F4 Phantom engines. The jet sets upon the dolly which is

fired off by the engines along a track in the runway. The force and speed of this jet-propelled dolly combined with the engine of the jet being launched catapults the aircraft upward in a very short distance.

The landing strip is made of 12-foot aluminum planks, each weighing 144 pounds. They fit together in a brickwork pattern. The complete system weighs about 25,000 pounds.

Here at El Toro launch and recovery gear is installed at each runway as a safety feature to stop planes in emergencies. The Corps is the only service that does this. The SATS system is also used to keep aviation Marines constantly prepared for combat situations where the system will be used.

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ENCLOSURE (6)

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