



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
3D MARINE AIRCRAFT WING
MARINE CORPS AIR STATION MIRAMAR
P.O. BOX 452038
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92145-2038

IN REPLY REFER TO:

5830

SJA

MAR 02 2009

FIRST ENDORSEMENT on [REDACTED] ltr 5830 SJA of 1 Mar 09

From: Commanding General, Third Marine Aircraft Wing
To: Files

Subj: COMMAND INVESTIGATION INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING
THE F/A-18 AIRCRAFT MISHAP INVOLVING BUNO 164017 THAT
OCCURRED ON 08 DECEMBER 2008 IN UNIVERSITY CITY, SAN
DIEGO, CA

1. Having carefully reviewed the subject investigation, the findings of facts, opinions, and recommendations of the investigating officer are approved except Opinions 26 and 27 and Recommendations 4 and 5, which are disapproved.

2. This tragic accident was the result of mechanical failures: first with the right engine, necessitating its precautionary shutdown, then with the fuel transfer system, ultimately causing the left engine to run out of useable fuel despite the presence of ample quantities of fuel in other tanks. Nevertheless, as borne out in the investigation, this tragedy was avoidable; any one of the following could have prevented this incident: more aggressive maintenance procedures; clearer guidance in maintenance publications; improved integration and supervisory oversight within the squadron Maintenance Division; increased training, situational awareness, and better decision-making by the pilot and squadron personnel directing the aircraft from the ground.

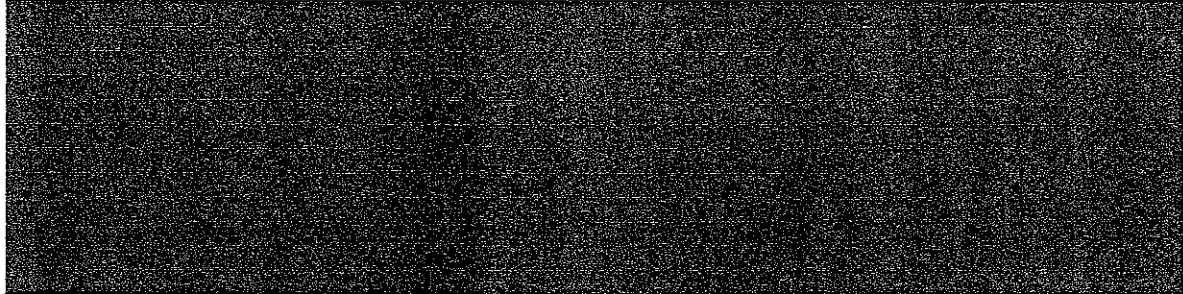
3. By all measureable standards, Marine Fighter Attack Training Squadron 101 (VMFAT-101) was performing its mission both safely and satisfactorily prior to this mishap. However, the squadron's leadership failed in a number of areas leading up to and during this incident. Accordingly, I have taken the following steps regarding personnel accountability:

a. I have relieved for cause the following personnel from VMFAT-101: [REDACTED] Commanding Officer; [REDACTED] Operations Officer; [REDACTED] Aircraft Maintenance Officer; and [REDACTED] Naval Aviation

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Training and Operations Procedures Standardization Officer and
Operations Duty Officer at the time of the mishap.

b. The following individuals have received appropriate
administrative measures per Chapter 1 of reference (a)

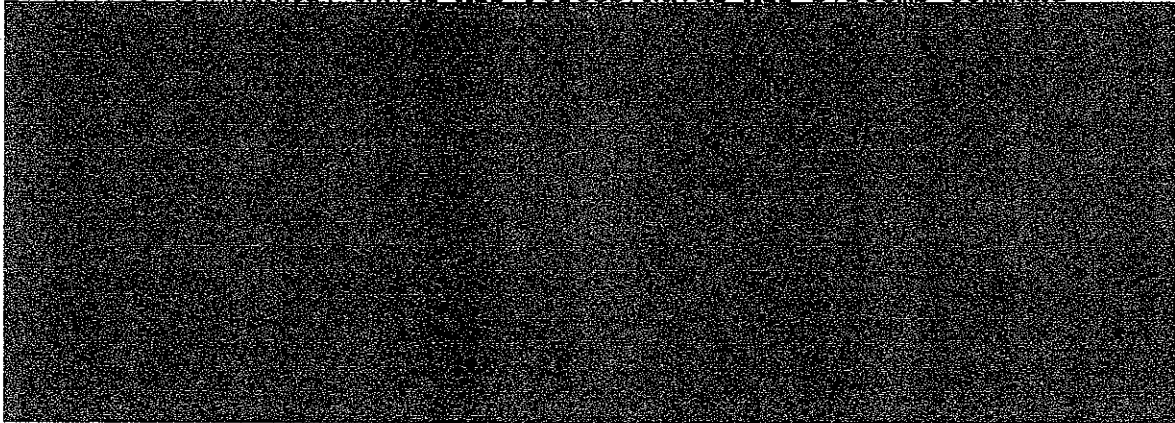


c. [redacted] is being addressed



4. In addition to the corrective actions listed above and
contained in Recommendations 6 - 13, the following additional
information and recommendations are provided:

a. 3d Marine Aircraft Wing (3d MAW) has formally requested
that the Commander, Naval Air Forces/Naval Air Systems Command



b. On 22 January 2009, the Commanding Officer, Marine
Aircraft Group (MAG) 11 issued interim MSP management guidance,
which provided to all MAG-11 F/A-18 squadrons enhanced policy on
critical fuel-system-related MSP codes, standardization of trend
analysis programs, and hot-pit and refueling procedures.

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c. The Assistant Chief of Staff, Aviation Logistics Division, is directed to conduct a comprehensive review of MAG and squadron "safe-for-flight" certification syllabi and procedures to ensure standardization within 3d MAW and to ensure compliance with governing directives.

d. The Assistant Chief of Staff, Aviation Logistics Division, shall review by-squadron compliance status for Maintenance Control Management Courses, take steps to attain full compliance where deficiencies exist, and coordinate with Headquarters, Marine Corps to improve the quality, effectiveness, and availability of these courses.

e. The Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, is directed to ensure that all squadrons are conducting drills and training geared toward improving ready room procedures, particularly during in-flight emergencies.


f. I recommend that Headquarters, Marine Corps consider



g. I also recommend that Headquarters, Marine Corps



5. Recommendation 10 is submitted to the Commanding General, Marine Corps Installations West for his consideration. While the overall post-mishap response was well-coordinated and well-executed, I concur that providing Air Station Aircraft Rescue Fire Fighters with communications equipment compatible with local fire departments would enhance their ability to communicate with one another.



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6. Per reference (a), the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate
will retain the original of this investigation for a period of
two years.

7. Our deepest sympathies are with the [REDACTED]
families and with all those affected.

T. G. Robling
T. G. ROBLING

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