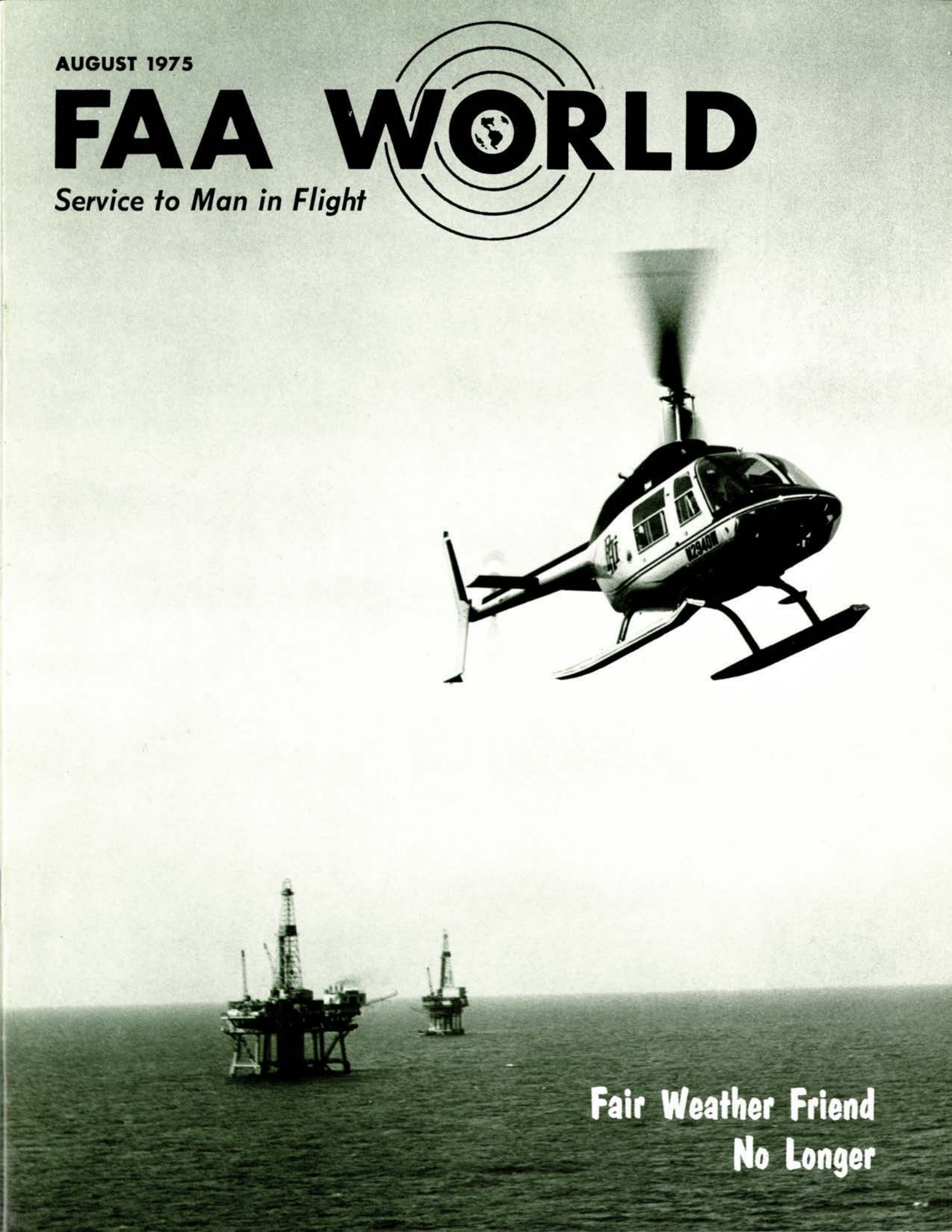
AUGUST 1975

FAA WORLD

Service to Man in Flight



Fair Weather Friend No Longer

Federal Notebook

THE VAGARIES OF PAY

The data thus far collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics is reported to show that private industry pay has gone up 9% to 12% since last October. Unless the President wins his plea for a 5% ceiling on Federal pay comparability increases, that's about how much white-collar employees may get this October, at a total cost of $4 billion. One factor that may make it difficult to convince Congress of that ceiling is that blue-collar Federal employees have been getting catch-up raises since the beginning of the year that have averaged 8.7%. ■ The Civil Service Commission is studying the total pay-comparability picture of government with industry, including the current uniform pay system and local prevailing rates in high- and low-cost areas. Rep. Benjamin Rosenthal (NY) and 18 cosponsors have introduced a bill that would use BLS cost-of-living data to determine appropriate salaries in cities of half a million or more population. ■ The president's Panel on Federal Compensation has been established to review Federal pay systems and report back by November 1. Vice President Nelson Rockefeller is the chairman and CSC Chairman Robert E. Hampton is vice chairman.

LATEST ANNUITY ROUND

Effective this month is a 5.1% cost-of-living annuity increase for Federal retirees. For those out before August 1, the annuity will be the higher figure from computations of the basic pension as of Dec. 31, 1974, plus the January 1 7.3% increase and the new 5.1% increase, or of the basic pension as of their last paycheck plus the 5.1% increase only.

RETIREMENT BILLS ADVANCE

Though a rocky road is seen for HR 5397, the House Civil Service Retirement Subcommittee has approved the bill to permit Federal employees to retire on immediate annuities after 30 years of service at any age. However, the bill does provide for a 2% per year reduction for under age 55. ■ The House Civil Service Committee has approved HR 504, which would reduce from 12 years to five the length of service needed to retain life insurance and health benefits after retirement and from 15 years to five for mandatory retirement at age 70. ■ At this writing, HR 7053 had reached the House floor and HR 5793 was ordered reported from the Post Office Committee. These bills would allow single retirees to restore their full pensions when their survivor designees predecease them, as was legislated for married retirees last year.

DOUBLE ANNUITIES

Rep. Leo Zeferetti (NY) has introduced HR 4732 to permit Federal employees to elect coverage under Social Security.

THE INSURANCE SCENE

Rep. Gilbert Gude (Md) has put in the hopper a bill to require advance notice and public hearings when a Federal plan health-insurance carrier proposes to cut benefits. ■ The bill to boost the government's share of life insurance premiums, HR 7222, failed in a vote to suspend the rules and must now travel through the Rules Committee. ■ If major Federal health-insurance companies agree to add dental care coverage next year, a significant rise in premiums is expected.

FAA WORLD

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Eugene Kropf — Western Region

The cover: *The helicopter has been a standard of transportation for offshore oilfields for a quarter of a century . . . but only in VFR weather. Now the FAA is experimenting with three IFR routes in the Gulf of Mexico.* PHI photo

Take Action In the Field

On a national scale, Washington sets policies and standards, makes plans and evaluates performance. The field is where the action is, where policies and plans are implemented and where the public has its most frequent contact with FAA.

But Washington, I can assure you, does not see itself as some kind of deity. Besides setting policy, Washington must commit itself to providing quick and clear technical guidance when the fields asks for it. Washington's role is not merely to give commands, but to help as well.

When field and regional offices need guidance, they must not wait and hope; they should ask. But there is still plenty of room for independent and quick action by the field within the limits of its delegated authority. When a safety or procedural matter arises that affects the public or the efficiency of FAA's operations, take action: Exercise authority or ask questions.

For example, the field has considerable latitude in coordinating activities among its different technical specialties —air traffic, airway facilities, flight standards. Decisions that don't involve policy changes can be made without bumping the matter up to Washington for approval. Similarly, the field can frequently deal directly with local and state officials, especially when questions are asked about FAA activities.

Remember that FAA's obligation is to the public, not to itself. But remember, too, not to confuse activity with action. Action is getting things done. Activity, all too often, can mean just talking or writing about getting things done.

Communication between field, regional and Headquarters counterparts is certainly encouraged, especially in an organization as large as FAA. We can't function without exchanging information and reaching mutual understanding. Talk, but remember to take action afterwards. The public safety demands nothing less.

James E. Dow

JAMES E. DOW
Acting Administrator

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: FAA employees should send their changes of mailing address for FAA WORLD to the control point in the region or center where they are employed: AAC-44.3; AAL-54; ACE-20; AEA-20; AGL-13; ANA-14; ANE-14; ANW-14.7; APC-52; ARM-5; ASO-67.1; ASW-67A7 ... and Headquarters employees, AMS-112. You should not send change-of-address information to Washington. If ... another, you should submit your change of address to the region or center to which ...

Fair Weather Friend No Longer

A Bolkow helicopter passes a pair of oil rigs in the Gulf of Mexico. PHI Photo

As the nation's shortage of fossil fuels continues to be acute, oil companies are looking with greater interest at the resources of the continental shelf. Already, the shores of Alaska, Mexico and the Gulf States have sprouted the steel towers that symbolize oilwells. With the growth of offshore oil has come the growth of its lifeline—helicopter transportation.

As has been demonstrated in the already-established oilfields in the Gulf of Mexico, however, that lifeline can be a sometime thing.

Today, lying injured, cut off from medical care by 150 miles of open sea, an offshore worker waits in pain for emergency transportation.

Thirty miles away on another rig, two dozen men are finishing a "normal" workweek—seven straight days, each 12 hours of dirty, back-breaking labor. They're tired and want to go home, but they continue drilling because replacements haven't come, and the work can't stop.

At that same hour, in the oil company's New Orleans office, a manager frowns over a set of figures in front of him. They show what it's costing his firm for crews drawing double time while replacements sit at the heliport making regular pay.

The three situations share the common thread that has tied the Gulf of Mexico's offshore community together for the past quarter century—the helicopter; but the choppers aren't running today. A layer of dense fog sticks to the Louisiana shoreline, dropping visibility to a few feet. For VFR flight, it might as well be made of brick.

The fog banks frequently lie for hundreds of miles along the coast and turn the weather to IFR. The helicopters must either wait it out or fly on instruments. The hitch is that the ground-based electronic support equipment for IFR stops at the water's edge. At the low altitudes where the choppers fly, navigational radio signals are unreliable or nonexistent more than a few miles off the coast.

Until current developments become a reality, the helicopter will have to wait out its tasks in such weather, and the injured worker probably will reach a hospital by boat, an agonizingly slow ambulance at best. To change this picture, a system of airways, procedures and instrument approaches compatible with the helicopter must be established to link the coast with the thousands of platforms that dot the waters. Recognizing this fast-growing area of aviation activity, which now involves 2.5 million movements annually, FAA has begun the steps that may make all-weather offshore helicopter flights a reality in the future.

With helicopters having demonstrated their unique suitability for offshore work for 25 years, manufacturers are now offering several models that can be outfitted for IFR.

The IFR system these aircraft will fly probably will not be the present system merely extended into the gulf. A. L. Dowdy, Southwest Region Airway Facilities planner, explains that the familiar VHF (Very High Frequency) omniranges, non-directional beacons and instrument landing systems common to land-based operation would be extremely expensive to gyrostabilize for installing them on platforms subjected to strong tides and winds that can reach hurricane force. And maintenance would be an Airway Facilities technician's nightmare.

According to Dowdy and Cleo R. "Mac" McGoveran, Southwest Flight Standards operations specialist, the answer may lie in new airborne and ground-based equipment being tested for possible application to offshore helicopter IFR. This equipment would operate on the VLF (Very Low Frequency) radio wave band. "VLF navigation is worldwide in scope, accurate and becoming available at reasonable cost as demand for its use increases," says McGoveran of this new tool. "VLF allows a cockpit display almost identical to the present VHF equipment, but it's not limited to 'line of sight' transmission, as is VHF."

Even more interesting, McGoveran relates that some studies indicate that VLF may be usable for "point in space" landing approaches—that is, flying aircraft to predetermined coordinates at a predetermined altitude. If adopted, this technique could lessen requirements for supportive electronic equipment at landing sites—an obvious advantage for offshore use. VLF transmitting equipment is land-based, but its signals are usable worldwide, even over the oceans.

Even if VLF is selected as the ultimate answer, a great many other factors must be considered in setting up a system with IFR reliability. Airways must be carefully chosen, coordinated and charted and separation standards adopted. Airway Facilities engineers and technicians must plan and establish

Alighting on an oil-drilling-rig helipad is a Bell 206B Jet Ranger, some 110 miles off Intracoastal City, La. At left, connected by bridgework is a production rig, which connects to shore refineries via a pipeline.

The "field" for these oilworkers is steel decking, as they send their drill far below into the Gulf floor.

Above right, the Bell 212 helicopter which Petroleum Helicopters, Inc., is using for testing the FAA-specified IFR routes into the Gulf of Mexico, approaches a four-platform complex in the offshore oilfields. Inside the test helicopter (above left), the pilot gets readouts similar to what he would with a standard VHF instrument system.

Above, PHI's base at Morgan City, La. At right, conferring on a flight manual at Morgan City are (left to right) Frank Nolden, chief of the New Orleans GADO satellite at Lafayette, La.; Dan Clay, vice president and chief pilot for Petroleum Helicopters; and Doug Tarlton, operations inspector from Lafayette.

air-to-ground communications relays along the coast and perhaps on gulf platforms to insure adequate radio coverage. Provisions must be made for accurate weather observations by specially trained personnel from the companies involved for some 1,300 landing sites and the more to come.

Attacking these and a host of other considerations is a team of regional Air Traffic, Flight Standards and Airway Facilities representatives—like Dowdy and McGoveran—and several field personnel—like area officer Guy Allen of the Houston Center and New Orleans GADO inspectors Frank Nolden, Jack Baldwin and Dick Birnbach, each a helicopter specialist. Birnbach has since taken another job.

Since the gulf area busiest in helicopter operations lies within the Houston Center's jurisdiction, Allen is responsible for reviewing all airspace actions contemplated for the system and for coordinating airways, fixes, approaches, etc.

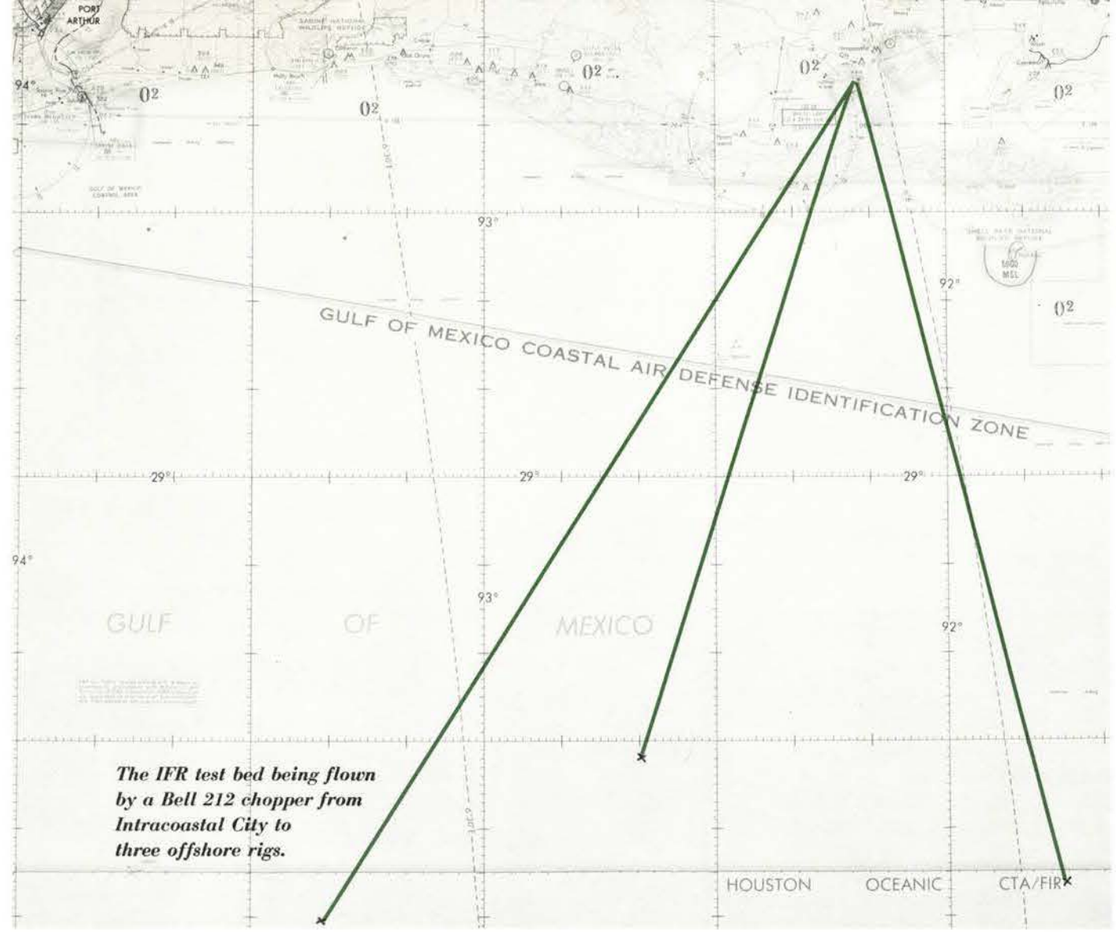
The GADO inspectors are concerned with the pilot, the aircraft operations and the maintenance activities that can be expected when the system is under development.

Their "test bed" is a short system of experimental IFR routes being flown by Petroleum Helicopters, Inc. (PHI), one of the oldest and best known—as well as the largest—of the gulf helicopter operators. Working with the GADO in Lafayette, La., PHI's home base, the company is now flying a Bell 212 on limited IFR over several routes, including three with long over-water segments. These run between their inland base at Intracoastal City, La., and three offshore rigs, all about a hundred miles away. Eight conventional instrument approaches—two each at four inland VORTACs—complete the experimental system, which allows GADO inspectors to observe all phases of flight that would be encountered with a full-scale IFR system. While studying the limited IFR routes and procedures, PHI and FAA are also collecting data on the accuracy and reliability of the VLF package installed in the chopper.

"The flying is similar to helicopter IFR over land," inspector Birnbach said, "except that you're flying a straight route, point to point, instead of following airways that may not be as direct over land. The real difference is in providing information for the VLF. You set up coordinates prior to departure by storing data in a navigation computer that's part of the package. The black boxes then give you readouts on the instrument panel very similar to what the pilot sees with VOR and DME (Distance Measuring Equipment). The pilot follows the course presented and navigates just the way it's done with VHF equipment today."

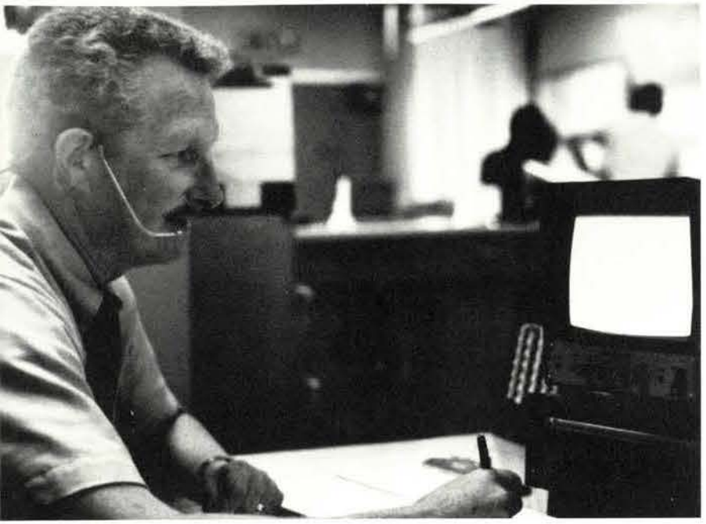
Helping plan the air traffic procedures to comple-

(Continued on page 15)



The IFR test bed being flown by a Bell 212 chopper from Intracoastal City to three offshore rigs.

This small helipad accepting a Petroleum Helicopters' Hughes 500 is a satellite well-production platform that pumps oil to the larger production rigs. PHI Photo



Briefers Banish Paper Blues

Phoenix FSS specialist Ron Spreit (left) uses a headset to keep both hands free as he garners weather data from a TV screen for a pilot briefing.

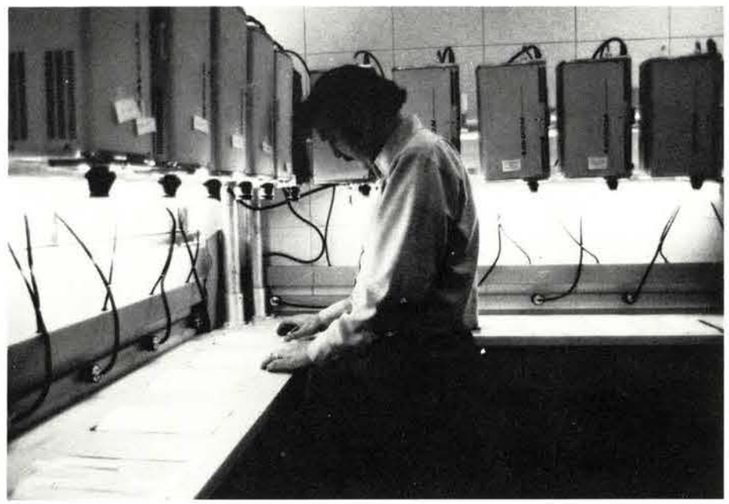
Below, teletypewriter operator John Rupp cuts and distributes hourly weather and forecasts under a bank of TV cameras.

The Phoenix, Ariz., Flight Service Station is making one teletypewriter do the work of four and, in the process, is saving paper, money, time and effort.

The station got rid of three of the noisy machines and installed a closed-circuit television system to display the information the specialists need for pilot briefings. John Andrews, the station chief, estimates that the saving on paper and machine maintenance alone will pay for the $20,000 system in three years.

In the past, as is customary at all FSSs, the specialists repeatedly had to walk to the machines, tear off the information they needed and return to their positions or leaf through stacks of previously torn off weather reports. Under the new system, the information is taken from the one remaining machine in another room and separated into displays under a bank of 12 television cameras.

Another camera is focused on a radar screen showing the local weather. Three others are focused on weather maps of the country,



Photos by Newton Phillips

Phill Humfield takes care of the walk-in trade, while three overhead TV cameras record the weather charts.

showing an analysis of surface weather, a depiction of the weather as it is plus the cloud cover, a chart showing thunder-storms and precipitation and charts showing forecasted weather in 12 and 24 hours.

Still another camera is aimed at a screen on which can be flashed such information as radio frequencies for airport control towers throughout the country, emergency telephone numbers and airport information.

The eighteenth camera is beamed at PIREPS (Pilots' in-flight reports) received by the station.

The cameras are connected to six television receivers at the briefing positions and the chief's desk. The specialists can select any picture or any sequence of pictures they need for briefing, without leaving their seats or poring over sheaves of teletypewriter paper. Adds specialist Newton Phillips, "To say nothing of the fact that you can actually work a full eight hours without having to listen to all that racket by those clattering machines."

Chief Andrews said that the system is working so well, they have plans to put additional receivers in the pilots' self-briefing room and in the general-aviation terminal at the airport. "This," he said, will make it easier for those pilots who prefer to brief themselves, while freeing the specialists to better serve those who call in."

The specialists are happy with the system. They've voiced no complaints about watching television all day. The shows may not be strong on plot, but it sure beats making all those trips to the machines.

Manning the pilot-briefing positions with the convenience and quiet of taking the weather off a TV monitor at each position are (clockwise from the left) specialists Bob Wilson, Ed Bell, Ed Kena and Phill Humfield.

SMALL WORLD

LOOK, UP IN THE SKY . . . You don't need X-ray vision to fly an airplane. In fact, if you had X-ray vision, you'd be Superman (or Superperson) and could fly without an airplane (or at least leap tall buildings with a single bound). Along this line, Drs. J. Robert Dille and Charles Booze of FAA's Civil Aeromedical Institute in Oklahoma City recently noted that the agency does certificate persons with less than perfect vision with appropriate safeguards as needed to prevent any compromise of air safety. FAA presently certificates some 4,700 pilots with blindness or absence of one eye, more than 14,400 with contact lenses, over 4,600 with deficient color vision and close to 19,000 with deficient distant vision. So don't be fooled by the next bespectacled mild-mannered reporter you meet. He/She may be able to fly . . . one way or another.

SEVENTY-SIX TROMBONES . . . Is Professor Harold Hill, the celebrated "Music Man," alive and well and living in Oklahoma City? The question has been raised by a trio of FAA accident prevention specialists who recently received a copy of the agency's latest safety film, "Takeoff and Landing," from the FAA Film Library in Oklahoma City. At least that's what the label on the film can said. But when they held their initial screening, they found they had something called "How To Organize A Marching Band." Obviously someone in the commercial laboratory which handled the film processing and distribution goofed. Or, to get back to our original question, is he?

WINGING IT . . . The job of the Airway Facilities technician is tough enough no matter where you go, but down in El Paso, Tex., it acquired some additional complications late this spring when the area was hit by an invasion of moths. The AF people reported that the moths had worked their way into control circuits, relays and other vital navaid components, causing a number of equipment failures. Various measures were tried to control the winged pests, including spraying and pesticide strips, but we think perhaps they neglected the ultimate weapon—you know, moth balls.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST . . . Michael Zywokarte of the FAA's Office of Aviation System Plans may not know it yet, but his days are numbered as the last entry in the DOT Washington telephone directory. The reason is Edmund Zyzys, who recently transferred to SRDS in Washington after more than 15 years of bringing up the rear in the NAFEC phone book. If he so desired, Zyzys also could be the last name in the Washington Metropolitan telephone directory but says he'll probably get an unlisted number like he did in Atlantic City. It's just too easy to find you when you're the last name in the book.

VIDEO PERSONALITY—*The new weather briefer for the Public Broadcasting Service national pilot and safety TV program is Will Nelson of the Washington FSS.*

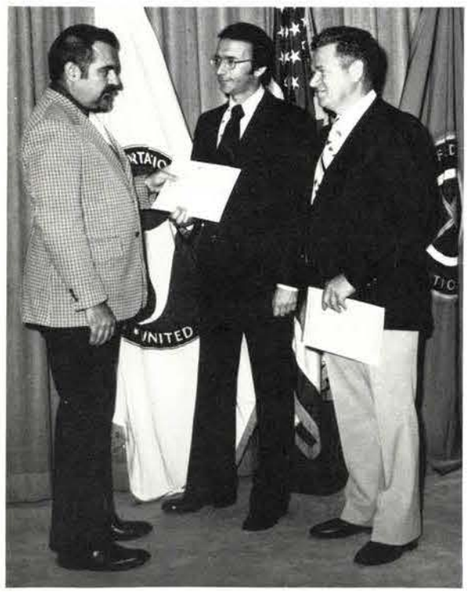
LAST DREAM BECOMES REALITY — *When the co-workers of ET Ruben Garcia of the Salt Lake City Hub Sector heard of his fatally-ill daughter's dream of going to Disneyland, they raised money region-wide to send the child and her parents. When his daughter died of leukemia in June, there was enough money left over to cover funeral expenses. Chipping in here are (left to right) Linda Fernandez, AF clerk-steno; Fred Chincholl, AT Planning; and Dee McCracken, Engineering and Manufacturing Branch secretary, Flight Standards.*

ALL'S RIGHTS WITH THE CHIEFS—*Mayor Tom Bradley of Los Angeles greets Robert Nishi, Civil Rights chief of the Northwest Region, at a recent national FAA Civil Rights Chiefs Conference. Waiting their turn are (left to right) Steve Lee, Headquarters Civil Rights specialist; Mary Berg, EEO program assistant; and Mildred Goodman, chief of the Complaints Division—the latter two from the DOT Civil Rights Office.*

FACES and PLACES

LIFE SAVER—*The Manchester (N.H.) Union Leader cited Boston Center controller Charles MacDonald at its 10th Annual State Hero Awards Dinner for his rescue of a boy who fell through thin ice on a pond last winter.*

PHOTO BUFF—*A collector of aircraft photos since 1961, Dave Ipsen, Seattle FSS specialist, made a display of Boeing transports for National Transportation Week.*



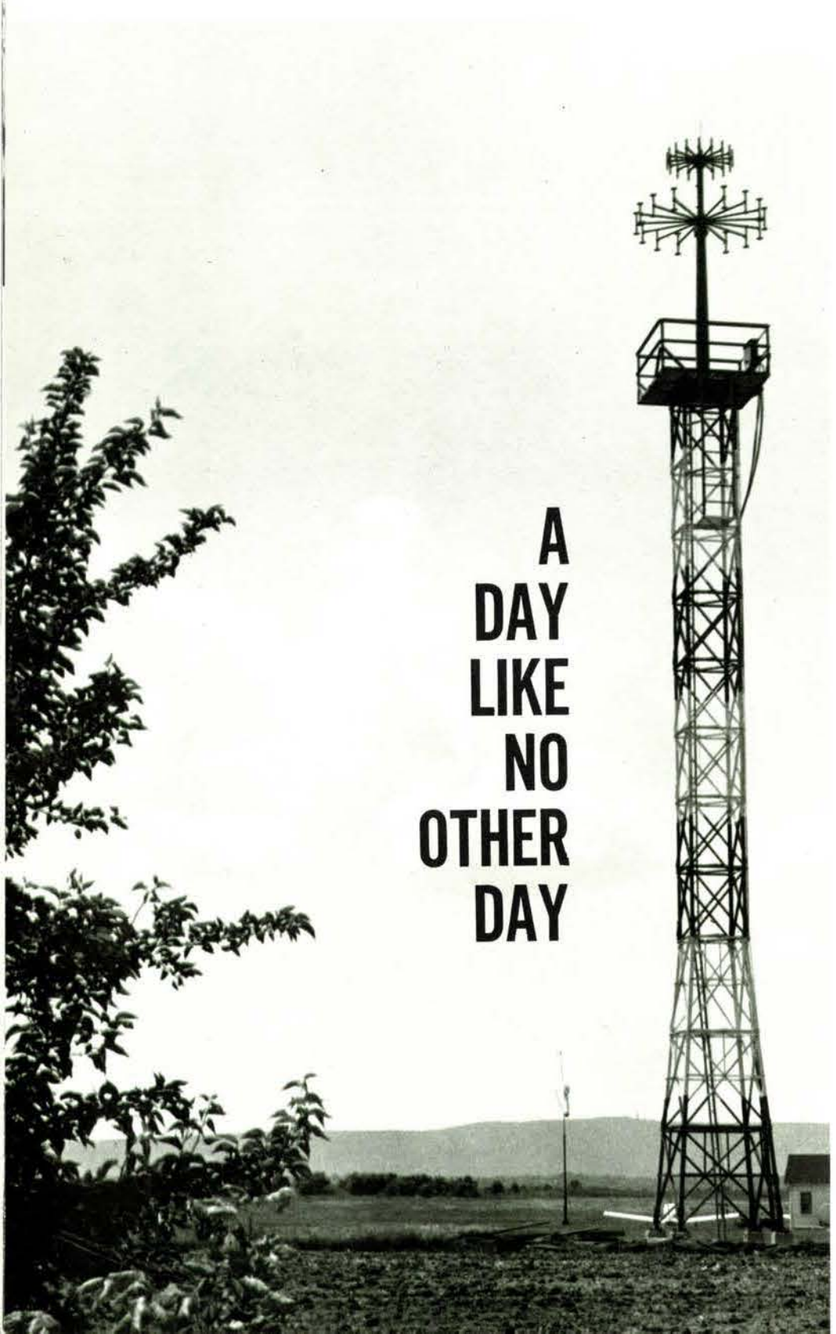
IN THE MONEY—*One of the biggest suggestion awards in Eastern Region history, $2,500, finds ATCS Milton Moskowitz (center) of the New York FSS/IFSS getting $1,000 and SET Joseph Palmieri (right) of the Islip, N.Y., SFO getting the balance from Acting Regional Director James Bispo. The duo devised a DF simulator for training specialists.*

PROUD UPPA THEMS—*Two Alaskan facilities garnered Facility of the Year awards. Al Crook (left), chief of the Anchorage GADO, accepted the Flight Standards national award, and chief John R. Bassler took the top Air Traffic award for the Anchorage Flight Service Station.*

NUMBER ONE—*Harold (Bud) Cole, ET at the Farmington long-range radar, Washington Pass, N.M., came in first out of 230 contestants in last fall's Prairie Dawg Motorcycle Club 0-125cc class Mile-High Enduro event.*

OUTSTANDING COACH—*Chosen as the Flight Instructor of the Year was Colene F. Giglio of Long Beach, Calif., here receiving her award from James Rudolph, Associate Administrator for Aviation Safety. Of Ms. Giglio's 34 students in the last two years, 31 passed on the first test.*

A FIRST—*Oklahoma City GADO inspector Howard Cable (left) issued the first Corvette type rating by the FAA in the U.S. to John Zwiacher (second from right), chief pilot for Air Center, the firm who completed the plane here. Next to Cable is Robert Briot, chief Corvette test pilot for Aerospatiale. At right is Ted D. Foster, Jr., president of Air Center.*



A DAY LIKE NO OTHER DAY

When he came to work Monday morning, Garland Holloman thought some of the flight-assist reports stacked on his desk were just carbons.

Thumbing through them, he quickly saw there were eight separate reports—all from one day.

Holloman, chief of the Martinsburg, W. Va., Flight Service Station, said with a chuckle, "Yeah, it was just another busy day for the station."

Every year, FAA flight service stations and air traffic control towers and centers make thousands of flight assists, but probably no facility has ever made eight assists in one day, and certainly never in 5½ hours.

It happened on Saturday, May 17, Holloman's day off. He was out playing softball, while his crew was making back-to-back flight saves. "All of our nine journeymen are highly competent," he said. "They've got a lot of years experience, so I never worry when I'm away."

Seven of the pilots landed safely at the Martinsburg airport, while one managed to continue his flight after getting his bearings from the FSS. All seven who landed came into the station to thank the flight service specialists.

Specialist Gilbert Shade, who made six of the assists, recalled, "One fellow—a student pilot who was lost and awfully confused about his radio communications—walked in and said, 'Man, thanks! I was really scared.' He went out and took off again a little later."

Even for the experienced pilot. as most of them were on May 17, it's a little disconcerting when the clouds suddenly close in, blotting out the terrain.

"You always wonder," said Shade, "can they keep the plane straight and level?"

Shade wondered about that, because the lost pilots that day were rated only for VFR flight. Caught in clouds, without a horizon or the ground to look at, the VFR pilot can easily lose both his way and control of his airplane.

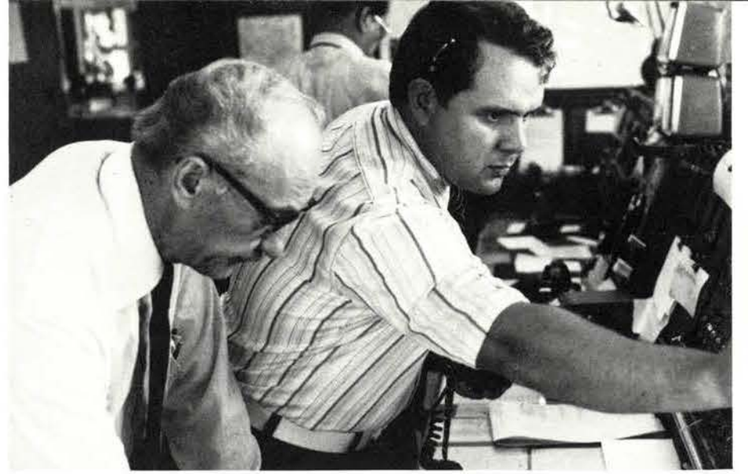
May 17 dawned with an overcast at 6,000 feet in the Martinsburg area, with no appreciable change forecast for the afternoon. At 8:30 a.m., there was a hint of things to come. Specialist William Sembello gave Dulles Tower a crossfix on a lost pilot Dulles was assisting. Going by the book, Martinsburg couldn't really call that its ninth—or rather its first—flight assist of the day.

At 12:30 p.m., however, a pilot who could not find the Martinsburg Airport below a rapidly lowering ceiling called the Air Force-staffed Martinsburg Tower for assistance. The tower handed the call over to the Martinsburg flight service station.

Gilbert Shade took the call and switched on the station's radio direction-finding equipment, which includes a small, green-tinted display that looks like a radar scope. When Shade asked the pilot to press his microphone button, a straight line shot out from the center to the right side of the scope. This meant the pilot was east of the airport, so Shade told him to fly west. Shade also asked the pilot for readings from the plane's VOR navigation receiver, enabling the specialist to figure out about how far the plane was from Martinsburg. Fortunately, the plane had plenty of fuel to get there.

At 1:03, a second lost pilot called the FSS. Gilbert Shade again handled the call. At 1:30, the tower relayed another pilot's call for assistance. Gilbert Shade took it. At 1:48 a fourth pilot called. Shade answered. At 2:02, while Shade and Sembello were still helping pilot number four, a fifth called in "not sure of his position." Shade, now a very busy man, responded. Aided at the plotting map and direction-finding console by Sembello, Shade juggled his communications between the two wayward pilots and was rewarded with safe landings at 2:17 and 2:33, respectively.

Breathing a little easier, but still very busy with routine communications. Shade took another call for assistance at 3:18 and, with Sembello, helped the pilot down safely by 3:32. Shade went off duty at 4 p.m. He had successfully handled six flight assists in three hours.



The two principals—Chester Evans (left) and Gilbert Shade—work the mid-watch at the Martinsburg FSS. Specialist Garrett Elswick is in the background.

"It was a little hard to believe there were so many lost pilots out there," Shade said with a puzzled expression later. "I saw only one of them land—I just had enough time to keep up with routine duties . . . contact with other facilities, getting late weather, taking new flight plans. Everything happened so damn fast."

Chester Evans, a veteran of 35 years at the Martinsburg Flight Service Station, took over the in-flight position after Shade left. "I was hoping it was all over," Evans admitted with a trace of a smile. But it wasn't.

At 5:48, a seventh lost pilot called. This time, however, the pilot was able to continue his journey without landing after Evans helped him get oriented. At 6:25, Evans, assisted by specialist Garrett Elswick, took a request from the Harrisburg, Pa., FSS for assistance to yet another airplane. The pilot was lost in a valley while flying in rain showers 40 miles north of Martinsburg. At five minutes before 7:00, the plane's wheels touched the concrete of the Martinsburg Airport's reassuringly long 7,000-foot runway. Martinsburg's busy day was winding down.

"When I made radio contact with one guy," Evans recalled, "he asked if our DF was working. I said yes.

Pilots' lives depend on this small circular scope — Martinsburg's radio direction-finding console, which is effective to 100 miles, but usually gets closer work. The DF antenna is on the opposite page.

Then he said, 'Would you mind cranking it up?' That's the way they are sometimes. Slightly embarrassed to ask for help and trying to be nonchalant. That's better than panic of course. Some pilots even ask for a 'practice' DF to the airport. But it's not always practice. We never kid them about it. We just give the service—immediately."

Even after making eight flight saves in one day, the specialists were pretty nonchalant themselves. It's all part of the job. Much more routine than it seems to an outsider. But there is pride, too. "You get the man on the ground . . . you're glad to get him there . . ." Evans said thoughtfully.

A local flight instructor who was flying near Martinsburg and listening to the radio chatter that Saturday had a different picture of it, Evans said. "He came in here and told us facetiously, 'I thought you guys were all wearing cowboy hats, you were rounding up so many strays.' "

None of the seven pilots who made the unplanned landings were in really critical trouble. They all had a couple of hours fuel and were able to follow the FSS's directions without much trouble. But the Appalachian ridges stuck up menacingly, and one pilot had to be told to climb to be sure of missing the hills.

"The student pilot, though—he was pretty upset," Shade remembered. "He kept saying, 'Martinsburg, Martinsburg, do you read? Do you read me? Do you know where I am?' I finally got him to the airport. The runway lights were turned all the way up, and I asked if he saw the airport. 'No,' he said. By then, I figured he was directly over the field, so I told him to look straight down. Then he saw it."

"You know, we've actually had four more flight assists since May 17," said Holloman. "In one, the pilot flew over Charles Town race track, saw its lights and said, 'Have the airport in sight.' But the specialist didn't see her and figured out pretty quickly where she had to be. He brought her in OK."

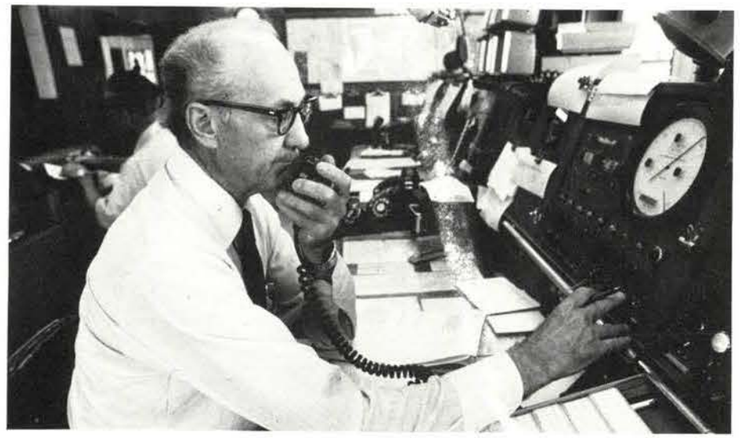
Holloman recalled the old aviation adage, "There's no such thing as being a little bit lost . . . and there's no sense waiting to ask for help. Good pilots will radio for help the moment they realize they're lost. But many pilots are embarrassed to ask for it. They've got to realize that their situation in the air can go from bad to worse very quickly. Sometimes, when pilots get really frightened and still get down safely, they're ruined for flight forever."

"Usually we make about 10 or 12 flight assists a year," Holloman continued. "It's only June now and we already have 17. Certainly bad weather has been a factor, and maybe more awareness by pilots of our services."

It turned out that May 17 was one of the station's busiest days that month. For pre-flight briefings, it was *the* busiest. "But we didn't lose a single service during all those assists," Holloman said.

"I checked the records and saw that we had 16,027 flight services in May," Holloman added. "That's the first time the FSS ever gave more than 16,000 services in a single month." It was the busiest month in the station's 40-year history.

And May 17 was just another busy day. *—Story and photos by Don Braun*



The happy carpoolers are (left to right) Elinor Rafferty, Airway Facilities; Bill Depuy, Airports; Bob Briggs, Airports; Andy Coughlin, Logistics; Maryellen Riley, Manpower; and Alan Bantly, Airway Facilities.

HIGH STYLE COMMUTING

Half a dozen New England Regional Office employees ride in a "club car" to and from work. The only thing odd about it is that they're not riding on a train.

The sixsome are carpooling in a luxury camper van owned by Bob Briggs of the Airports Division. When the carpool was formed last November, the members didn't realize they weren't only going to save gasoline and money. As it worked out, everyone except the driver now enjoys French toast and coffee on the road in the morning and occasionally cocktails and hors d'oeuvres on the way home from work.

They really enjoy all the comforts of home, since the van is fitted with a stove, refrigerator, sink and toilet. One rider pointed out that it can also sleep four people, "which is good if we ever become stranded during a snow storm on Route 128."

All of the travelers live from 25 to 40 miles from the office, but boredom is never a traveler in Brigg's club car. Bill Depuy, who usually rides "shotgun," often plays his guitar; Elinor Rafferty, who initiated the idea of French toast, is termed "the life of the party" and often chases the early-morning blahs with her jokes; Maryellen Riley, because she is the youngest member of the group, often acts as "flight attendant." Her duties, which, it is said, she assumes willingly, range from serving cheese and cocktails to cleaning spilled coffee when the van swerves suddenly. Briggs gets his share of the goodies, but often wishes he could be a passenger for the return-trip refreshments.

The elite group of carpoolers realize that they are often the object of snickers from other commuters, but they know when they've got a good thing.

—Story and photo by Vet Payne

Fair Weather Friend No Longer *(Continued from page 7)*

ment the hardware is Sabe Comley, Southwest air traffic specialist, who has been working with the development of offshore IFR since FAA's initial involvement more than two years ago.

"Right now, we see at least two major steps in the evolution of a workable system," he says. "There would be an initial period during which the choppers would use the IFR capability only to get beyond the recurring fog bank just off the coast. Pilots would file IFR to a point in space beyond the area of low ceilings and visibility and, when they get there, cancel the IFR flight plan, proceeding to their destination platform under VFR. The clearance would be two-way, so that if they should reach the clearance limit and not have sufficient visibility, they could turn around on the same route by reference to instruments." Comley sees the second step as the addition of instrument approaches to the platforms for use when IFR weather extends far out over the gulf. The options in this are being studied.

A veteran controller and planner, Comley thinks the day will come when full IFR will be as commonplace 200 miles or more into the gulf as it is over solid ground today.

While this is a worthy goal in itself, the experimentation going on hints of widespread applications in the future, as the search for oil and minerals under the world's seas proceeds with increasing vigor. With the search come requirements that only the helicopter can meet efficiently. With the help of FAA-developed IFR procedures and facilities, it can meet them full-time. *—Story and photos by Jon Ellis*

DIRECT LINE

Q. During a recent change of station, I discovered that employees without dependents are allowed only $100 miscellaneous expenses and a maximum of 5,000 pounds of household goods, while persons with dependents are allowed $200 miscellaneous expenses and a maximum of 11,000 pounds. Not only does this regulation discriminate against single persons but it is gross discrimination to those without dependents. The inequality lies in the total yearly wages, since moving allowances are included in the W-2 total and, therefore, considered as total earnings. The only answer to my questions on this has been "That's the way it is." This answer does not satisfy me. I would like to know what has been done about this, if anything or where I can get more information.

A. Federal Travel Regulations now issued by the General Services Administration, which were implemented by FAA Order 1500.14, prescribe the $100 miscellaneous expenses and a maximum of 5,000 pounds of household goods for employees without dependents. The GSA is aware of the discrimination in the regulations and is now studying other areas of discrimination along with those mentioned.

Q. As a faithful government employee, I am very concerned with regulations established in the 60s that officials now seem to disregard. They are the ones that state that any government installation with 50 or more employees must establish an EEO officer. Why isn't FAA following this up?

A. There has never been a Federal regulation or policy requiring government installations to appoint EEO officers on the basis of employment population. Current Civil Service Commission regulations (Sec. 713.204(c) of Ch. 713) do require that agencies designate as many EEO officers and other officials as may be necessary to assist the head of the agency in meeting EEO requirements established. The FAA has satisfied this requirement by appointing an EEO officer for the FAA, as well as field EEO officers in each region and center. CSC guidelines suggest, however, that agencies appoint at least one EEO counselor for every 500 employees in large facilities and one counselor for every 50 employees in small field facilities. The FAA has responded to this when deemed practicable. Any employee wishing to consult with an EEO officer should contact his or her regional Civil Rights Staff. Employees wishing to consult an EEO counselor (for informal discrimination complaints) should contact any of the counselors listed on employee bulletin boards in all FAA facilities.

Q. The GS grade structure of an air traffic control facility is determined by the volume or number of operations controlled by that facility. How is the grade level of the instructors at the FAA Academy determined?

A. The grades of all positions are based on the application of appropriate Civil Service Commission position classification standards. In the case of ATCSs, the appropriate standard is the GS–2152 series, which provides grading criteria based not only on the volume of traffic but also on the complexity of the work situation. It provides examples of this complexity under the terminal, center and station options. The grades of instructors at the FAA Academy are also based on the application of appropriate classification standards. Because most instructors will return to their regular career field after serving as instructors, a relationship is maintained with the career grade structure in the various services. In addition, developing course material, instructing and evaluating student performance are other factors that are considered in determining instructor grade levels.

Q. Order 3450.7B, The Recognition and Awards Program, provides in Para. 73, Sec. B, for the reconsideration of a rejected suggestion when it can be shown that "significant factors were misunderstood and the suggestion was not properly evaluated." What is the procedure for reconsideration of such a suggestion?

A. An employee may submit a request for reconsideration of a rejected suggestion through channels to his Recognition and Awards Coordinator, providing he can present new facts or additional justification or show that significant factors were misunderstood and the suggestion was not properly evaluated. The suggestion will then be re-evaluated based on the additional information, and the employee will be advised of the results through that coordinator.

Q. The Western Region Career Progression Order, WE 3330.24A, 24 Jan. 73, in conjunction with our Merit Promotion Handbook, WE 3330.1A, Feb. 74, specifies the journeyman-level experience required (one year) in each option, tower and radar, to be qualifid to bid up the ladder. From June 1969 to December 1970, I was a GS–12 journeyman in a combined tower/TRACON. From then until March 1971, I was a GS–12 tower-only journeyman. From March 1971 to the present, I have been a GS–12 TRACON-only journeyman. Even though my tower-only journeyman time was for a period of less than the one year required, will my time spent in the combined tower/TRACON count toward my one year tower time?

A. In accordance with Western Region MPP evaluation procedures, journeyman experience in a combined tower/TRACON is given full credit for both the radar and tower specializations. Therefore, assuming you were assigned the combined duties on a rotating basis, you meet the requirements.

Q. I am a developmental controller, GS–7, and I currently have 17 months remaining in my six-year military obligation in the Air National Guard. I understand that ATCS career positions, GS–9 and above, are considered critical positions in time of emergencies and that it is the agency's policy that controllers are deemed unavailable for military duty when reserve units are activated. I will be eligible for promotion to GS–9 this October and would like to know if this policy means that I must still attend weekend drills but not active-duty training. Will FAA assist in pursuing an early termination of the remainder of my obligation? My work schedule and drill schedule are in constant conflict.

A. Agency Order 3300.4A, Annual Screening of the Ready Reserve, states the policy regarding the relationship of an FAA key position and a position in the Ready Reserve. Any employee who is filling a key position and is also a member of the Ready Reserve will be reported to his unit as being unavailable for recall to military duty. Each employee shares with the agency the responsibility for keeping his military service informed of his status at all times. Final determination as to whether the key employee is retained in the Ready Reserve will be made by the military service involved. An ATCS at GS–9 and above is considered one of the FAA key positions; so, upon reaching the GS–9 level, make sure that your personnel office submits DD Form 1286 to the appropriate military center. The only assistance that FAA can give in gaining early termination of your reserve obligation is by denying a certificate of availability, which should discourage further training.

Q. I started work with the FAA in 1973 as a co-op student at the Miami Center. At that time, we were led to believe that we would be hired, but now they are letting us go, blaming it on the Civil Service Commission. A few of us have been hired as GS–5s, but the FAA keeps hiring GS–7s from outside. I, as a GS–3, and fellow co-ops who are now GS–5s are doing 90 percent of the training on the floor, which is illegal. The FAA bends the rules to suit their needs, it seems. How does the FAA justify the loss of all the money invested in us, especially when we're being kicked out and more are coming in?

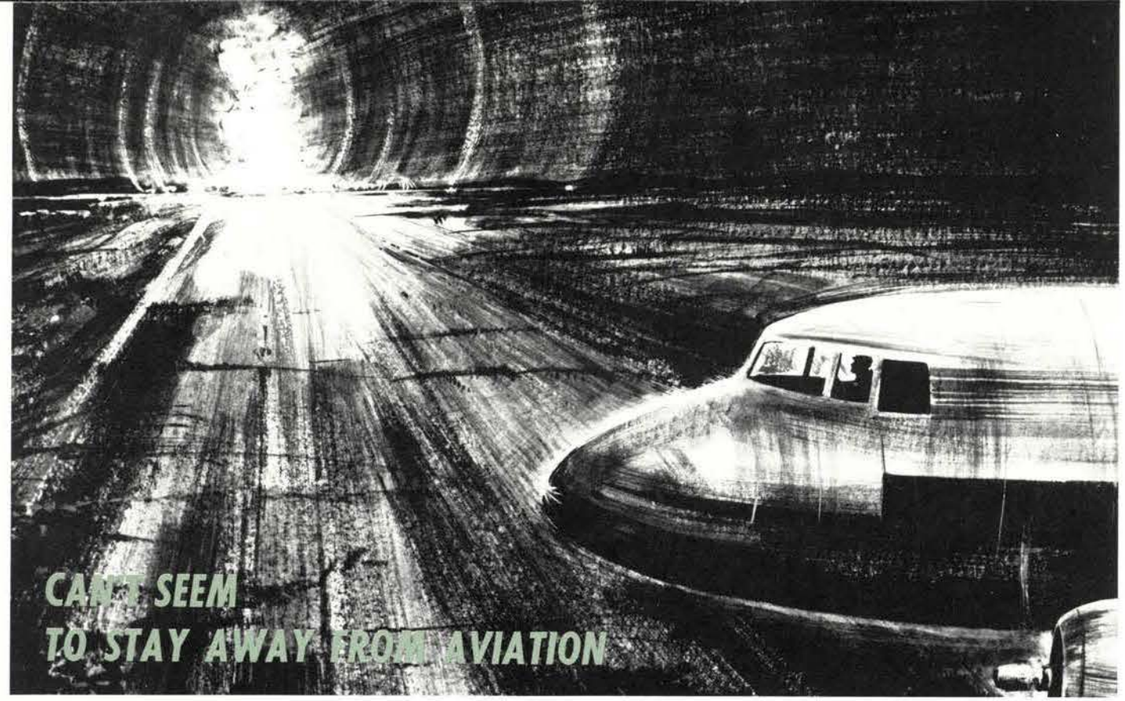
A. For several years, the agency has realized the potential benefit of the Cooperative Education Programs as a source of quality condidates for ATCS positions. We have been successful in permanently placing those who satisfactorily complete their training, although each year, this has become increasingly difficult. At first, we established participants on certain Civil Service Commission registers and reached them for career appointment. Now, however, we are prohibited from using one register for initial appointmnt with the intention of reassigning the appointee into another occupation. In addition, the CSC is no longer accepting applications for ATCS, GS–4, 5, 7, since these registers have hundreds already on them. Participants in the program repeatedly have been advised that a permanent appointment could not be guaranteed. We are sorry that our optimism on this program has dimmed. Further, we are now obligated to redirect our co-op efforts to programs with four-year institutions by Executive Order. Your Manpower Division will be happy to provide any further information.

Q. As an enroute controller, I use publication 7110.9D as my reference for control services. On occasion, various controllers have interpreted its content differently from other controllers. Training departments are also of limited assistance, since they, too, rely on individual interpretations. Please advise me as to whom I might contact for authoritative advice on the true intent of a specific paragraph.

A. The air traffic specialists' handbooks, 7110.8D, 9D and 10C are the direct responsibility of the Headquarters Air Traffic Operations and Procedures Division. On that basis, interpretations—using the word in its narrow sense—can be provided only by that office. However, the Air Traffic Procedures Branch in each region is responsible for providing staff support and assistance to the field facilities on such matters. They do and will advise field facilities regarding the intent and background information on the handbooks' contents. Often, this is obtained by telephone rather than by correspondence. In the event you are unable to obtain an understandable explanation from your immediate supervisor, training department or other staff office, you should move your request through channels. If the facility chief or his designated staff member cannot answer your questions, they will obtain the correct answers from the region. When necessary, the Procedures Specialist in the region will obtain the needed information from Headquarters.

Is there something bugging you? Something you don't understand? Tell it to "Direct Line." We don't want your name unless you want to give it, but we do need to know your region. We want your query, your comment, your idea—with specifics, so that a specific answer can be provided. All will be answered in this column, in the bulletin-board supplement and/or by mail if you provide a mailing address.

Better two-way communication in FAA WORLD's "Direct Line" is what's it's all about.



Art by Leonard Fletcher

"The whole heavens lit up. It was a tremendous sight, almost unbelievable." John Marcotte, controller at Evansville, Ind., Dress Regional Airport, was recalling July 16, 1945.

What he had seen from the cockpit of a DC-3 was the first atomic explosion at White Sands Proving Grounds in New Mexico. At the time, he was a TWA co-pilot in his third aviation career, flying at 10,000 feet between Kansas City and Albuquerque, some 150 miles from the blast. "We had no idea what it was until a month or so later," he said.

When he retires in "five or 10 years" to his farm, he will be taking up his eighth aviation career at the same time. After college graduation, he piloted Ford Tri-motors for a Honduran airline, flying everything from bulldozers to babies from a Nicaraguan port to a goldmine in the jungles of Central America.

Two years later, he returned as chief pilot at the Tuscaloosa, Ala., Airport, where he taught air cadets, mostly in a Stearman, between 1939 and 1944. The end of the war found him working for TWA.

Then, Marcotte did something about which he is now a little red-faced but not unhappy, since it eventually resulted in his joining the FAA in 1960. He decided his pay as a co-pilot was too low and that the airlines would never pay much more; so, he quit to become an airport manager and fixed-base operator at Terre Haute's Paul Cox Field. During this period, he was a flight instructor as well, something he may take up again as a retirement vocation.

Marcotte is proud that his son Mike is the fourth generation of his family on the farm, where corn and soybeans are his chief crops. But he is equally proud of another son, John, who works as an engineer on military aircraft design, because aviation and farming have been Marcotte's lifetime pursuits.

"I like aviation," said Marcotte. "Air traffic control is part of it, too. I can't seem to get away from it, no matter what I do." Because at 58, he comes under the old regulations that require retirement at 70, he may be at Evansville Airport for some time yet. If he goes for "early" retirement, he'll still likely have ties with the agency as pilot and flight instructor.

—Story and photo by Majorie Kriz

The voice of experience—nearly 40 years of it—at Evansville Dress Regional Airport counts with the "youngsters" surrounding John Marcotte. Clockwise around him are ATCS Gary Kingsbury and David Rothery, Herb Weigand and Mark Falkenstein, all developmental controllers.

At Both Ends of the Mike

At the Prescott, Ariz., Flight Service Station, they practice for their emergencies. That practice, they believe, makes them better able to help a pilot in trouble and understand what's going on in the cockpit and in his mind. That's because they've been there themselves.

In addition to practicing how to help a pilot, they simulate being pilots in trouble. To do this, one or more of the specialists go up in a rented aircraft at their own expense and declare simulated emergencies. Then it's up to their colleagues on the ground to find a way to get them out of it.

On the next occasion for this exercise, they change places, with the former "distressed pilots" now in the saviour role at the FSS for other specialists in the airborne role.

"It keeps them on their toes, and it keeps them from getting rusty," said Gene Floerchinger, assistant chief of the station. "It also gives our specialists who aren't pilots a good idea of what it feels like to have an emergency in the air."

The technique works because eight out of the dozen specialists that make up the Prescott station's complement are pilots—including six with commercial, instrument or instructor ratings—and two are student pilots.

"They might not get the same feeling in the pit of the stomach that a pilot would in a real emergency," Floerchinger continued, "But it does give them a pretty good idea of what a pilot's problems are when things start to go bad."

A typical simulated emergency, he said, would be one in which a VFR pilot finds himself flying above an overcast and needs help in finding his way down through it. Help from the ground would probably involve the specialists trying to determine his position with direction-finding equipment and helping him to find the nearest hole in the clouds. Or, Floerchinger suggested, an IFR pilot's instruments might be said to malfunction, and the specialists in the FSS would try to get him down to where he could continue his flight via VFR. Still another—engine trouble for a pilot unfamiliar with the area, where the specialists would have to direct him to the nearest airport in a hurry.

Several of the specialists belong to flying clubs, he explained, and are obligated to pay for a set amount of flight time each month. By splitting the cost with the specialists who just ride along on the simulated emergencies, including the non-pilots, those with the airplanes can save some money as well as maintain their piloting proficiency. And, he pointed out, the flights are made only when the weather and the volume of traffic the FSS is handling permit.

"It's an entirely voluntary effort," Floerchinger said, "and we think it's a good one, because it keeps us ready for trouble."

—By Myron Lowdermilk

HEADS UP

ALASKA

Henry Keiner has been selected as general facilities and equipment technician foreman at the Anchorage ARTCC.

EASTERN

Assuming the post of chief of the Allentown, Pa., Tower is *John Johnson*, former assistant chief at the Dulles Tower . . . *Luther Quarles* goes from Regional Noise Abatement Officer to deputy chief of the Buffalo, N.Y., Tower . . . the new deputy chief of LaGuardia Tower is *Uriel Flax*, AT Procedures.

GREAT LAKES

Selected to be assistant chiefs are *Brad Orndorff* at the Fort Wayne, Ind., Tower; *Mike Leskovac* and *John Manski* at the Youngstown, Ohio, Tower; *Ken Firl* at the Rochester, Minn., Tower; *Zonnie Fritsche* and *Ray Drake* at the Lansing, Mich., Tower; and *Ryan Gove* and *Bob Margala* at the Madison, Wis., Tower . . . *Robert Carson* was named manager of the Akron, Ohio, Airway Facilities Sector . . . *Matthew Huff*, former chief of the Cleveland FSS, is now the chief of that facility . . . a former assistant of the Cleveland-Hopkins Tower, *Henry Anderson* got the nod as chief of the Saginaw, Mich., Tower.

NAFEC

Dan Hamilton has been named acting chief of the Engineering Management Staff . . . the new chief of the Airport Operations Branch is *John Presley*.

NEW ENGLAND

John E. Van Horn from Headquarters Air Taxi & VSTOL Airworthiness Section was named chief of the Portland, Me., GADO.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN

Chester Gibbons of the Ogden, Utah, Tower has taken over as chief of the Aspen, Colo., Tower . . . coming from the Rock Springs, Wyo., Sector Field Office to chief of the Sheridan, Mont., Sector Field Office is *Richard V. Roberts* . . . *Odell "Bob" Huffine* was promoted from Eastern Region Manpower assistant chief to Manpower chief in Denver.

SOUTHWEST

The new Dallas-Fort Worth Airway Facilities Sector manager is *Bob Naylor* . . . the new assistant sector manager at the Albuquerque ARTCC sector is *Valgene Eberline* . . . *William F. Poston* was chosen for chief of the College Station, Tex., Sector Field Office . . . The Fort Worth ARTCC sector has a new manager in *Frank Johnson* . . . Selected as sector manager at the Houston ARTCC was *Harry A. Lyssy*.

WESTERN

Norman Walters has reported aboard the Tucson, Ariz., Tower as an assistant chief . . . *John Boyce* is a new assistant chief of the Bay TRACON in San Francisco . . . the new chief of the Palo Alto, Calif., Tower is *Henry Barbachano* . . . named an assistant chief at the Blythe, Calif., Tower was *Emil Sereda* . . . *Ward Stevenson* has moved over to chief of the San Carlos, Calif., Tower.

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AERO CENTER'S NAVIGATION FIX-IT SHOP

The "Roadrunners" of the Aeronautical Center have another feather in their . . . tail. The Aircraft Services Base, whose emblem is the cartoon character The Roadrunner, now is the only certified Inertial Navigation/Area Navigation (INS–RNAV) repair station in the world.

Nathan Parsons, avionics technician at the Aircraft Services Base, checks the alignment features of the new Inertial Navigation System maintenance equipment.

It all began when the Flight Standards Service decided to equip the 20 new flight inspection jets with these systems. The heart of the Inertial Navigation System is an extremely accurate gyroscope and accelerator platform, which senses the smallest changes in the motion of an aircraft. The INS computer then can constantly update its longitude, latitude and altitude data, giving a continuous fix on the jet's location. Combining this with the RNAV computer, the systems can program the aircraft to fly from one geographical point to another with almost uncanny precision.

As a result of this sophisticated equipment addition, test stations have been set up at the Aircraft Services Base Hanger 8 to provide a complete maintenance capability. Additional test equipment, repair parts and components have been acquired, and both formal and on-the-job INS maintenance training is being conducted. This equipment puts the new repair shop on a par with those of the INS/RNAV manufacturers, according to the Aircraft Services Base chief, R. Desmond Gibson.