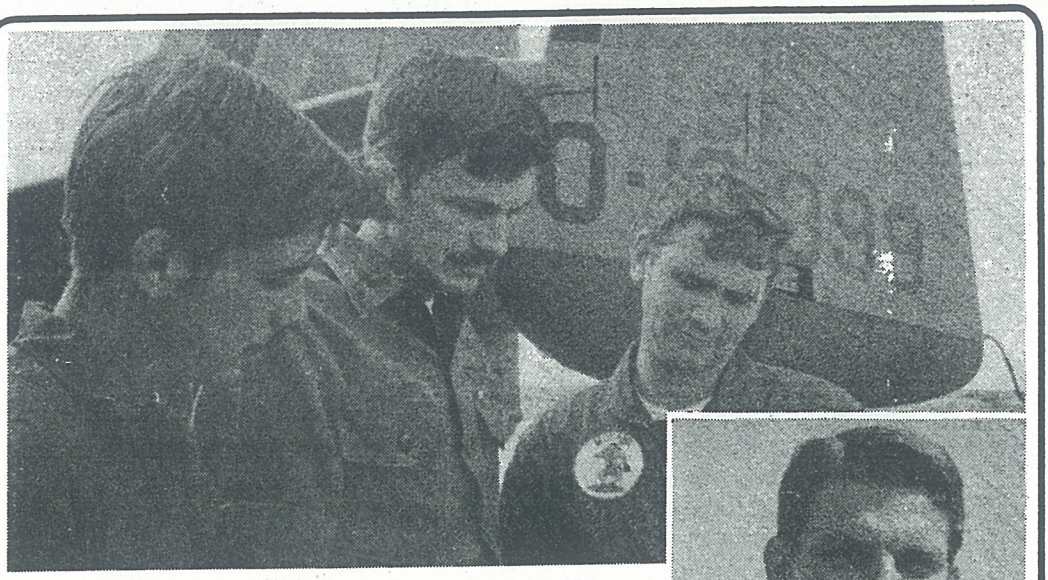
Staff Sgt. Harley Cox Gary Skidmore)



'Close encounter'

Sgt. Donald Haas, Capt. Don Callicott and Staff Sgt. Pete Honaker view a map tracing their route through the Bermuda Triangle. Spec. 5 Mark Rasco (insert) said, "Flying through the Bermuda Triangle gave me a very uneasy feeling. After all the stories about that area, I felt as though our lives were in jeopardy. During the flights, especially the night flight, there was a building tension, as though at any moment we would have some sort of a 'Close Encounter' of the unbelievable kind. It was quite an experience."

EPG flies into Bermuda Triangle

Story and photos by Terry Callahan

From Aug. 6 through Aug. 31, the U.S. Army Electronic Proving Ground's (AEPG) Aviation Branch was flying radar mapping missions for NASA and the Corps of Engineers Research Center in North Carolina.

The missions, headed by Capt. Don Callicott — pilot, were to observe and gather technical information concerning ocean wave patterns and turbulence. Staff Sgt. Pete Honaker — crew chief, and Spec. 5 Mark Rasco alternated the missions as Technical Observers (TOs).

On Sept. 1 the AEPG aviators were alerted to the approach of hurricane Ella off the coast of Virginia — they were asked to conduct more surveillance, and to assist in the validation of satellite information about the weather update.

At 9 a.m. the team, in their Hawk 99 (Mohawk) aircraft took off from Cape Hatteras, N.C., to track Ella. Flying parallel to the hurricane, the crew found themselves flying into the mysterious area of the Bermuda Triangle.

The crew flew four more times over the next three days: three missions during the day — and once at night. "The night mission was the scariest! There you are following a hurricane, and all the weird stories about the Bermuda Triangle start creeping into your head," shuddered Callicott, "all the wind, thunder and lightning out there didn't do a single thing toward helping a person relax."

1977

RASCO'S

EPG Mohawk helps St. Helens survey

A routine flying mission to the Seattle area turned into a once in a lifetime experience for Captain John McAdams and Sp5 Mark Rasco of the Electronic Proving Ground's Aviation Branch.

The mission was to fly over naval installations to check for heat loss. However, a TV news program about Mt. St. Helens led Captain McAdams to contact the U.S. Geological Survey team.

EPG's Mohawk aircraft with its infrared imagery equipment was available to fly around the perimeter of the mountain to check for fissures and hot spots. The Survey Team agreed, EPG agreed and the two men took off for the mountain.

Flying at just 1,000 ft. over the mountain, the men noticed that the crater was not erupting but seemed to be emitting a blue flame. After completion of the filming and flight, Rasco turned the film over to the Survey Team and instructed them in the interpretation of the imagery.

A spokesman for USGS stated that if the two EPG soldiers had not volunteered their efforts, hot spots and fissures might not have been found. With the film, they can keep their eyes on danger areas. Both McAdams and Rasco were happy to offer their services and even more grateful for the experience.