

WHEN SECONDS COUNT!

From Office of Information
Perrin Air Force Base, Texas.

Ingenuity, resourcefulness and job "know-how" — all have been combined by the helicopter men at Perrin Air Force Base, Texas, in devising means of saving those precious seconds which could mean life or death to a rescuee.

Under the leadership of Major John A. Price, OIC of the Helicopter Section, personnel have been encouraged to devise ways of stowing gear most efficiently in the unit's H-43As and to develop additional equipment to improve their rescue capabilities. The major also contributed many ideas and suggestions and worked with his personnel on several of the projects.

As a result of this informal but carefully supervised program, plus constant practice and training in all phases of helicopter rescue work, the section developed a hair-trigger readiness which was clearly shown a few months ago when an F-102 coming in at night for an emergency landing crashed just short of the runway. Within 90 seconds from the time the aircraft hit the ground the rescuemen were throwing foam on the burning plane, laying a path to the cockpit to rescue the pilot. Unfortunately, he had been killed by the impact.

Saving time through preparedness in advance has been the keynote of Major Price's program and under his supervision crews practiced all emergency procedures over and over again to keep in top form and to insure that their actions under every foreseeable rescue condition would be "learned responses" that come automatically.

"Under the conditions of an actual crash there is a tendency on the part of everyone to be in too much of a hurry and the result is that often ordinary precautions are sometimes forgotten," Major Price said. This constant practice gives the rescuemen confidence and assurance that they can handle any situation and such practice also makes their response to an emergency quick, yet sure, the major added.

