



COMPACT UNIT—Aerial view shows relation of the helicopter pad to the operations ramp and nearness of alert crews' trailer. Also shown is old aircraft fuselage used by crew members in practicing their pilot rescue techniques. (USAF photo)

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A horn on the outside of the trailer is connected to the primary crash circuit and when it blows — the alert crew goes. In order to meet the three-minute limit the alert pilot gets the details of the emergency after he becomes airborne.

If the aircraft in distress intends to land at Perrin, the alert chopper orbits about a half mile off the approach end of the runway in case the emergency aircraft lands short. If there is a crash or bailout beyond Fire Suppression Kit range, i. e., 15 miles, the alert chopper returns to the pad, drops off the Kit, exchanges one crash-rescue technician for a flight surgeon or medic, refuels if necessary, and proceeds to the scene.

Because Perrin AFB is very close to Lake Texoma (one of the largest artificial lakes in the U.S.) and the GCA and ILS approaches pass directly over the lake, water rescue has a big priority.

In the winter time the rescue practices are simulated but during the warmer months the crews keep in practice by making actual water pickups.

Drift markers, parachute flares, life preservers, and a one-man life raft are carried in the helicopter at all times and a six-man life raft is kept handy in the alert trailer. The unit also has a working agreement to assist the U.S. Corps of Engineers at Lake Texoma, in some of their emergencies, such as boating accidents.

Last November the alert crew was called into action when four teen-age youths overturned a boat. When the helicopter arrived at the scene the crew found three boys clinging to the boat and the fourth swimming toward shore. One of the firemen tossed a six-man raft to the three clinging to the boat, jumped in after it, inflated

it, and hauled the youths aboard. In the meantime, the helicopter went after the one who was swimming and picked him up in the sling.

Another occasion when the alert crew was called into service was following a flash flood near Broken Bow, Okla., on a Sunday afternoon last July. A fisherman took refuge in the top of a tree to escape the fast rising waters. Rescue attempts by nearby spectators were thwarted by rushing water and debris. After the man had been in the tree seven hours the Oklahoma Highway Department requested help from Perrin AFB. Upon arrival at the scene, the helicopter hovered near the tree top while firemen demonstrated to the fisherman the correct way to don the sling. Then the man was lifted into the helicopter and taken to Broken Bow.



WATER RESCUE—In order to be ready for any eventuality, alert crews at Perrin practice actual water pickups at Lake Texoma during warmer months. Practice in winter time is simulated. (USAF photo)