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Navy performs aerial acrobatics to lure potential officer candidates

By JOE SCAMARDO
"Where did you say that barf bag was?" a shaky voice asks from the back seat of a Navy trainer as it rolls out of a violent maneuver that seems to cause the world to roll and spin wildly outside the plane's plexiglas canopy.

Even to people with extensive conventional flying time, the acrobatic maneuvers such as Immelman turns, barrel rolls, split-s and 1/2 Cuban eights performed for interested persons by Lts. Steven Booher and Wally Briens of the Navy Aviation and recruiting team, can be upsetting, physically as well as mentally.

The recruiting team has been outside the Memorial Student Center all week, but the acrobatic flights were completely booked by Monday afternoon.

The recruiters said the Reserve Officer Training Corps do not provide the number of officers needed, so they recruit at the four-year uni-

versities.
Lt. Booher, a one-time finalist for the Blue Angels (the Navy precision flying team), said getting airsick is a normal part of learning aerial acrobatics. "I got airsick half a dozen times when I began flying acrobatics," he said.

Before leaving Easterwood Airport, all passengers signed a waiver form, in case of any accident. After being outfitted with a fireproof suit, a helmet and a parachute, each passenger was instructed in emergency procedures. "If we have to evacuate the aircraft while airborne, this (the D-ring you pull to open the parachute) will be good for a free drink in any bar," said Booher.

After takeoff, the passenger dubiously pushed the parachute instructions to the back of his mind. Feeling a bit nervous but exuberant as the plane climbed away from the airport and up to 5000 ft., he experienced the unique adventure of aerial ac-

robatics.
As the plane rolled into a maneuver, the intercom echoed Booher's off-key singing, while the passenger's stomach complained about the unnatural motions it experienced. It was hard not to feel a little queasy, but it was even harder not to be thrilled by performing maneuvers that were more the province of birds, rather than Aggies.

Some of the maneuvers, such as inverted flight in which passengers actually stood on their heads on the canopy, and attack dives, which were easy until the centrifugal force tripled their weight during the pull out, were especially hard on the stomach.

Most initiates to acrobatic flying were relieved to be on the ground again after the flight. However, many of those who returned with filled barf bags were disappointed when the 20-minute flights ended and were ready to try it again sometime, but with a more empty stomach.

Marines vow: training quality to be maintained

Associated Press
SAN DIEGO — The commander of the San Diego Marine Recruit Depot says he will not permit any decrease in the quality of training at the depot or the men it turns out.

"We plan to furnish the same discipline, spirited Marines and treat them with firmness, fairness, dignity and compassion," Maj. Gen. Kenneth Houghton said in his first interview since the death of Pvt. Lynn McClure.

McClure, 20, of Lufkin, Tex., was knocked unconscious by one of the padded ends of a pugil stick last Dec. 6. He died still unconscious in a Houston hospital March 13.

An investigation has been completed by the Marine Corps and Houghton said he is studying it. Copies are expected to be made public this week.

The assistant base commander, Brig. Gen. David Twomey, said in an interview with the Washington Post that McClure's death was very tragic.

"It should have never happened," Twomey said. "It's a black mark against the Corps. It's a black mark against me because I was chief at the time."

Twomey said recruits reported the San Diego base and the Marine recruit base at Parris, S.C., will find a welcome change from the one that greeted McClure.

Some Marine drill instructors (DIs) interviewed by the Post believe new policies designed to reduce training abuses will result in a failure rate among recruits.

Post reporter George C. Houghton interviewed a half dozen Marine Corps Recruit Depot, San Diego, Calif.

The instructors told Houghton they will carry out a new low-stress training policy because the command is ordered to do so.

"It's going to be a challenge," Gunnery Sgt. William A. Lutz, 36, of Brighton, Mich., told Houghton. "I think there's going to be heartbreaks for a while."

"Many of these kids have failures all their lives. They go to school, they quit jobs and now going to make them fail again, you're going to give them another chance."

Under the policy, Commandant Louis H. Wilson has named motivational platoons, recruits who couldn't keep up their contemporaries were in a training drill.

McClure was a member of a platoon when he was in a training drill.

In the Post interview, the instructors said the motivational platoons succeeded in making recruits work harder and they vented them from dropping the Corps.

The changes in recruit training being put into effect elsewhere, well, a base spokeswoman said.

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