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NATO Standard

MPP-02.3.9

**MARITIME CONSIDERATIONS ON
THE CONDUCT OF FAST ROPING
AND RAPPELLING (FRR)**

Edition (A) Version (2)

DECEMBER 2018



NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

MULTINATIONAL PROCEDURAL PUBLICATION

**Published by the
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NATO LETTER OF PROMULGATION

5 December 2018

1. The enclosed Multinational Procedural Publication MPP-02.3.9, Edition A Version 2, MARITIME CONSIDERATIONS ON THE CONDUCT OF FAST ROPING AND RAPPELLING (FRR), which has been approved by the nations in the Military Committee Maritime Standardization Board, is promulgated herewith. The agreement of nations to use this publication is recorded in STANAG 1444.
2. MPP-02.3.9, Edition A, Version 2 is effective upon receipt and supersedes MPP-02.3.9, Edition A, Version 1 which shall be destroyed in accordance with the local procedure for the destruction of documents.
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4. This publication shall be handled in accordance with C-M(2002)60.



Zoltan GULYAS
Brigadier General, HUNAF

Director, NATO Standardization Office

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NATO Nations, NATO Partner or Participating
Nation's Letter of Promulgation

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RECORD OF RESERVATIONS

CHAPTER/ PARAGRAPH	RECORD OF RESERVATIONS BY NATION
0104	GRC, ITA
0108	GRC, ITA
0109	ITA
0110	ITA
General	PRT

NOTE

THE RESERVATIONS LISTED ON THIS PAGE INCLUDE ONLY THOSE THAT WERE RECORDED AT TIME OF PROMULGATION AND MAY NOT BE COMPLETE. REFER TO THE NATO STANDARDIZATION DOCUMENT DATABASE FOR THE COMPLETE LIST OF EXISTING RESERVATIONS.

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RECORD OF RESERVATIONS

NATION	RESERVATION DETAIL
GRC	(1) With reference to paragraphs 0104 and 0108: - the rope master is a qualified person within the team members and under the supervision of a qualified crew member.
ITA	(1) With reference to paragraphs 5 (new 0104) and 13 (new 0108): - the rope master is ALWAYS under the supervision of a qualified crew member; - the rope master is ALWAYS a qualified person within the team members and can NOT be an aircrew member. (2) With reference to hand signals mentioned in sub-paragraph 6.b (new 0104.2.b.)(specific responsibilities-qualified cabin aircrew-member), A/C member is responsible for the following (hand) signals confirmed by back brief: - adopt crash position; - carry out emergency jump. (3) With reference to sub-paragraph 6.c (new 0104.2.c.)(specific responsibilities-qualified rope master), add the following item: the rope master is responsible for following (hand) signals confirmed by back brief: - prepare for FRR; - next person to the rope; - GO; - HOLD; - break off; - lock off.

NOTE

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RECORD OF RESERVATIONS

NATION	RESERVATION DETAIL
ITA (cont)	<p>(4) Paragraph 17 (new 0109.3)(approaching the aircraft) to be modified as follows: the team members are only to approach the aircraft on either the command of the aircraft commander or a signal by the aircrew. The aircrew must always obtain permission by the aircraft commander before giving the approach signal to the team members. Personnel are to walk to the aircraft and approach the door as previously briefed.</p> <p>(5) With reference to paragraph 23 (new 0110.2), before the release sequence, the following additional steps must be carried out: - 10 minutes signal -no action from team. – 6 minutes signal - personnel start to prepare for FRR. – 3 minutes signal – team leader check position with GPS and gets ready. – 1 minute signal – personnel stand ready to go. - when cleared from pilot – rope master/qualified aircrew deploys rope, check no knots on the rope, aircraft height and hover position and report ready to the pilot. After receiving permission to deploy the team, the rope master will direct the release of personnel IAW the sequence described in paragraph 23 (new 0110.2).</p>
PRT	AIR FORCE does not participating.

NOTE

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NATIONAL COMMENTS

NATO NATIONAL COMMENTS
BEL - Agree with procedure but has no national maritime aircraft to conduct FRR (cross deck fast roping and rappelling). Ratification will improve safety during maritime cross deck fast roping and rappelling.
CZE - Current budget cuts and missing conception of the CZE armed forces for cooperation on the sea prevent setting of implementation date. CZE armed forces plan re-evaluation by 2014.
FRA - The formats prescribed in AAP 03(J) will have to be adopted in the next edition of this STANAG.
GRC - Rappelling operations are not conducted by Hellenic Navy Helicopters. During night ops only S-70 type Helicopters are utilized.
HUN - HDF does not have Navy.
SVN - Republic of Slovenia does not have means covered by this agreement.

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LIST OF REFERENCES

1. MPP-02 - *Helicopter Operations from Ships Other Than Aircraft Carriers (HOSTAC) (Maritime VSTOL Data Included)*

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CONVENTIONS USED IN THIS PUBLICATION

RESERVATIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

NATO Reservations and Partner/Global HOSTAC Participating Nations' Observations will be delineated by their respective 3-letter national country code within the margin. Refer to the Record of Reservations and Observations for details.

CHANGE SYMBOLS

Revised text from new versions are indicated by a black vertical line in the margin of the page, like the one printed next to this paragraph. The change symbol indicates added or restated information. A change symbol in the margin adjacent to an annex number and title indicates a new or completely revised annex.

WARNINGS, CAUTIONS, AND NOTES

The following symbols and definitions apply to warnings, cautions, and notes used in this publication:



WARNING

**AN OPERATING PROCEDURE, PRACTICE, OR
CONDITION THAT MAY RESULT IN INJURY OR DEATH
IF NOT CAREFULLY OBSERVED OR FOLLOWED.**

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CAUTION

AN OPERATING PROCEDURE, PRACTICE, OR CONDITION THAT MAY RESULT IN DAMAGE TO EQUIPMENT IF NOT CAREFULLY OBSERVED OR FOLLOWED.

NOTE

AN OPERATING PROCEDURE, PRACTICE, OR CONDITION THAT REQUIRES EMPHASIS.

WORDING

Word usage and intended meaning throughout this publication is as follows:

“Shall” indicates the application of a procedure is mandatory.

“Should” indicates the application of a procedure is recommended.

“May” and “need not” indicates the application of a procedure is optional.

“Will” indicates future time. It never indicates any degree of requirement for application of a procedure.

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CHAPTER 1—MARITIME CONSIDERATIONS ON THE CONDUCT OF FAST ROPING AND RAPPELLING (FRR)

0101 Purpose

To specify the detailed requirements for the safe conduct of cross deck fast roping and rappelling (FRR) utilising national and/or another nation's aircraft and personnel.

0102 Agreement

The participating nations agree to adhere to, as a minimum, the requirements and procedures specified in this standard.

0103 General

PRT

1. The requirement exists for nations to be able to conduct combined joint maritime FRR operations. This may include FRR of a national helicopter and crew composition to another nation's deck as well as mixing aircraft and crews from different nations for a specific operation.

2. Before using mixed nation FRR teams for operational missions the formal bi- or multi-lateral agreement(s) of each participating nation is required. Pre briefing is a mandatory requirement before conducting cross deck FRR Operations, specifically hand signals, emergencies and method of descending are to be briefed. An intensive training phase prior to conducting multinational FRR on an operational level is mandatory. FRR operations in general should only be undertaken when it is viewed as the most efficient and practical method of completing a task. The decision to FRR will be decided based on such constraints as hover height, team member weight, etc.

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WARNING

IF THERE IS ANY DOUBT REGARDING THE CONDITION, COMPATIBILITY OR AUTHORIZATION OF THE EQUIPMENT AND/OR PERSONNEL, FRR OPS SHALL NOT BE EXECUTED FOR TRAINING.

0104 Personnel Requirements and Responsibilities

**GRC
ITA**

1. FRR operations require thorough planning and a high degree of cockpit/cabin crew co-ordination. Whilst the aircraft commander retains overall responsibility for the aircraft and the conduct of the operation, the rope master is responsible to the aircraft commander for the execution of FRR operations. Within the cabin of the aircraft the rope master is normally under the supervision of a qualified aircrew-member or is the qualified aircrew-member.

2. Specific Responsibilities are as Follows:

ITA

a. Aircraft Commander

- 1) For FRR training, ensures the receiving ship's CO is briefed.
- 2) Retains overall responsibility for the aircraft and the conduct of operations.

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WARNING

PREVAILING ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS (RELATIVE WIND SPEED AND DIRECTION) AT THE RECEIVING SHIP ARE TO BE ASSESSED TO ENSURE AIRCRAFT PERFORMANCE IS MAINTAINED.

- 3) Ensures general safety of the operation.
- 4) Ensures that aircraft hardware is inspected by qualified personnel before flight.
- 5) Ensures that all personnel are adequately briefed.
- 6) Studies obstacles/hazards on the receiving ship and briefs crew/boarding party accordingly.
- 7) Determines hover-height for FRR operations in agreement with the rope master.
- 8) Selects drop zone.
- 9) Authorises deployment of the rope and dispatch of boarding party.
- 10) Confirms who will bring the associated FRR equipment, the AC or the FRR team.

Depending on the helicopter specifics and procedures of different nations the following duties might be combined or separated.

b. Qualified Cabin Aircrew-Member

- 1) Conducts aircraft safety briefing to boarding party personnel.
- 2) Coordinate (hand) signals confirmed by back brief, such as:
 - a) Prepare for FRR.

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- b) Next person to the rope.
 - c) GO
 - d) HOLD
 - e) Break off
 - f) Lock off
 - g) Adopt crash position
 - h) Carry out emergency jump
- 3) Ensures correct attachment of FRR equipment and rope(s) to the helicopter.
 - 4) Inspects equipment available (e.g. rappelling device, rope, aircraft hook) and checks its compatibility (dependent on national procedures).
 - 5) Is responsible for compliance to flight safety aspects within the cabin.
 - 6) Deploys rope(s) after being cleared by the aircraft commander.
 - 7) Carries out the following checks after rope is deployed:
 - a) No unintentional knots in the rope(s).
 - b) Sufficient rope lying on the drop zone IAW national procedures.
 - c) Hover position and height appropriate for the operation.
 - 8) Retrieves/releases the rope after boarding party insertion.
 - 9) Continuously informs aircraft commander about the progression of the FRR process including completion of FRR after final team member is on the ground and clear of the rope(s).

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c. Qualified Rope Master* (also referred to as dispatcher in some countries):

- 1) Discusses conduct of FRR operations, national FRR procedures and limitations of the team (if applicable) with aircraft commander/aircrew.
- 2) Ensures correct attachment of FRR equipment and rope(s) to the helicopter (dependent on national procedures).
- 3) Inspects equipment available (e.g. rappelling device, rope, aircraft hook) and checks its compatibility (dependent on national procedures).
- 4) Attends briefing of the aircraft commander on the operation.
- 5) Carries out the following checks after rope is deployed:
 - a) No unintentional knots in the rope(s).
 - b) Sufficient rope lying on the drop zone IAW national procedures.
 - c) Orders team member to the rope.
- 6) Passes rope to the rappellers and assists them in hooking up.

* A qualified rope master either is a qualified cabin aircrew-member, a team member or a designated qualified person. In case the rope master is a team member, they should be the final team member to descend.

d. Team leader (could be qualified rope master):

- 1) Responsible for currency of team members.
- 2) Conducts briefing of team members after the aircrew briefing.
- 3) Ensures that all team members are correctly dressed.

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- 4) Determines sequence of descent of the team member and reports it to the qualified helicopter aircrew.

e. Team members:

- 1) Check their specific dressing and equipment to ensure that there are no loose items or unsecured straps.
- 2) Hook up to the rope.
- 3) Clear the area underneath the helicopter immediately after descent.

f. Receiving ship during training only:

- 1) Ensure deck and personnel preparation is completed.
- 2) Maintain communications with helicopter for co-ordination.
- 3) Maintain suitable course and speed for helicopter to hover safely.
- 4) Be prepared to recover helicopter in an emergency if flight deck fitted.
- 5) Be prepared to render medical and emergency services if required.

0105 Training/Currency

1. Aircrew and boarding party personnel are to be qualified and current in accordance with national requirements.
2. All personnel are to have completed a brief on the agreed procedures before commencing cross deck FRR operations.
3. Completion of the relevant national underwater escape trainer for boarding party members is to be IAW the flying nation's regulations.

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0106 Equipment

1. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the team members during transit shall be agreed to prior to mission brief. Team member operational dress shall be IAW national standards.
2. The FRR equipment (ropes, harnesses, rappelling devices, etc.,) shall be compatible and authorized with the airframe and individual equipment of team members.

0107 Planning and Briefing

1. Besides the individual briefings of the aircrew and the FRR team, each FRR operation will be preceded by a general planning briefing conducted in a language understood by all participants. The briefing must be attended by the aircraft commander, aircrew, rope master (if applicable) and the team leader and has to cover, as a minimum the following items:
 - a. Conduct of the operation in general.
 - b. FRR drop zone (size, obstacles etc.)
 - c. Probable hover height, maximum and minimum acceptable hover height.
 - d. Number of team members to descend.
 - e. Limitations of the FRR team / aircraft if applicable.
 - f. Hazards caused by external equipment, if applicable.
 - g. Method of team member recovery.
 - h. Duties covered in para 6.
 - i. Actions in case of emergencies:
 - 1) Aircraft (engine failure, control malfunction, etc.,)
 - 2) FRR (team member stuck during descent, fouled rope(s))
 - 3) Medical (team member injury)

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The aircrew and team members shall be briefed on the entire operation separately by the aircraft captain and team leader. For guidance on the items to be covered during the briefing see Annex A.

0108 Rigging and Inspection

**GRC
ITA**

1. The qualified rope master could be either qualified aircrew member, team member or a designated qualified person. They are responsible for the inspection of the aircraft and rope prior to commencing operations. This will include:

- a. Inspect the aircraft anchoring point(s) and attachment hardware.
- b. Inspect the rope(s) for wear, moisture, dirt/grease and general condition.

2. For FRR operations it is strongly recommended that the equipment is to be rigged with a minimum of one safety line/safety point (where possible) which must bypass all possible primary hardware failures. This safety line will be secured to a secondary strong point in the aircraft so that quick release by the aircrew/fast rope leader is possible in the case of emergency.

NOTE

CERTAIN NATIONS DO NOT USE A SAFETY LINE/SAFELY POINT.

0109 Conduct

ITA

1. The procedures used for FRR from helicopters may vary according to the different types of aircraft used. There are, however, basic procedures that are common to all types of helicopters.

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2. During Single/Multi-Point FRR ops, the maximum number of ropes should be determined by national procedures.
3. The team members are only to approach the aircraft on the command of the aircraft commander. Personnel are to walk to the aircraft and approach the door as previously briefed.
4. All personnel should be seated in the appropriate exit order keeping movement in the aircraft to a minimum; however, for particular circumstances (short transit/ bulky equipment) this can be impractical and team members may be seated on the cabin floor. Whenever possible, every effort should be made to secure the team. All personnel are to remain seated until directed to exit.
5. In the event of an inflight emergency, personnel are to remain seated and secure. They are to wait until the rotors have stopped turning before exiting the aircraft, unless directed otherwise by the aircrew.
6. At night the helicopter landing lamp may be used (if appropriate) to facilitate the boarding.
7. During FRR ops visual ID or confirmation the minimum of rope on the deck in accordance to national regulations is the responsibility of the rope master. By night national procedures might state the use of a cylum, landing light, NVG or other means.

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CAUTION

IF THE EQUIPMENT BECOMES ENTANGLED IT MAY BECOME A HAZARD TO THE AIRCRAFT. IF THIS IS THE CASE, THE ENTANGLED ROPE(S) WILL BE JETTISONED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.



WARNING

THE EQUIPMENT IS NEVER TO BE SECURED TO THE DECK OR SURFACE IT HAS BEEN DEPLOYED TO.

0110 Fast Rope Specifics During Conduct

ITA

Specifics for Fast rope and Rappelling operations are described separately below.

1. Fast ropers are to descend IAW their national procedure.
2. After receiving permission to deploy the team the rope master will direct the release of personnel using the following sequence:
 - a. Unfasten seat belts/harness (in suitably equipped aircraft).
 - b. Stand by (designated personnel move to the door).
 - c. Take position (roper closest to the rope rotates towards rope and grasps it at eye level).
 - d. Exit the aircraft.

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NOTE

THE SEQUENCE MAY BE CONDUCTED USING PRE-BRIEFED HAND SIGNALS.

0111 Rappelling Specifics During Conduct

1. Rappellers are to descend in accordance with their national procedure.
2. For safety reasons, the first rappeller should, when possible, steady the line and act as a brakeman when reaching the ground.

0112 Actions After FRR

1. After the team is deployed, the rope(s) will be retrieved or released clear of personnel.
2. If rope(s) is (are) to be released, the rope master/qualified aircrew member checks that all team members and stores are on the ground and clear of the rope(s). They may then drop the rope(s) and allow it (them) to fall clear of the aircraft. If the rope master/qualified aircrew member cannot clearly see each team member on the ground for each rope, they must not drop the rope. If any doubt exists, the rope must be pulled up until the end of the rope can be clearly seen above the ground before jettisoning.
3. The qualified cabin aircrew-member will clear the pilot to depart before the aircraft leaves the hover position.

0113 FRR Emergency Procedures

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1. Anyone can stop the procedure at anytime if it is thought that something is wrong or unsafe.
2. In case of an emergency the helicopter may have to depart from the FRR area immediately to perform a fly away or ditching manoeuvre. In this case the FRR process has to be stopped immediately, team members in the cabin have to remain in the helicopter and adopt the crash position. In case of any minor emergencies training missions are to be aborted. During operational FRR the further course of action will be decided by the aircraft commander.
3. In the event of a FRR emergency, no further FRR descents will be executed until the cause of the emergency is established.

0114 Limitations

1. The following limitations should be adhered to. Any deviations have to be formally agreed to beforehand:
 - a. Maximum number of personnel on a rope is to be determined by the national procedures of the FRR team and aircraft limitations.
 - b. The safest hover height for the FRR operation should be agreed upon during the brief and should be IAW the national standards of the FRR team.
 - c. Normally no loaded weapons are allowed in the aircraft during training exercises.

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ANNEX A

FRR BRIEFING GUIDANCE FOR AIRCREW/BOARDING PARTY

A.1 Administration

1. Identify key personnel - Aircraft Commander/aircrew/qualified rope master/team leader.
2. Complete manifest.
3. Check qualification of aircrew, rope master and currency of team members.

A.2 Overall Mission and Aim of FRR Deployment.

1. Situation

- a. Weather forecast
 - 1) Sea state/swell/visibility/wind/precipitation
- b. Personnel involved
- c. Type and number of insertions
- d. Aircraft description
- e. Target ship
 - 1) Name/type/size
 - 2) Landing zone details/obstacles
 - 3) Required hover height
- f. Timings
- g. Threat/hazards
- h. Other participating forces

2. Equipment

- a. Personal/stores

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- b. Dangerous goods
- c. Rope length

3. Execution

- a. Loading order.
 - 1) Stick order - load in reverse.
- b. Embarking in aircraft.
 - 1) Safe approach lane to aircraft.
 - 2) Seat belts - thumbs up when secure in aircraft.
- c. Hand signals used.
 - 1) Prepare for FRR.
 - 2) Next person to the rope.
 - 3) GO
 - 4) HOLD
 - 5) Break off.
 - 6) Lock off.
 - 7) Adopt crash position.
 - 8) Carry out emergency jump.
 - 9) Clear off the rope.
- d. Team deployment.
 - 1) Exit location.
 - 2) Do not move until instructed by the qualified rope master.
 - 3) Body/hand position for exit.
 - 4) Clear rope below.
 - 5) Make positive braking.
 - 6) Clear area immediately after landing.
 - 7) Assign positions for insertion.
 - 8) Safety - stay alert/follow instruction.
 - 9) Upon reaching the ground, the first rappeller should steady the line and act as a brakeman.

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4. Emergency Procedures

- a. Helicopter emergency landing.
 - 1) Terminate FRR procedure.
 - 2) Boarding party member on rope complete descent as rapidly as possible.
 - 3) Once on the ground clear from under aircraft immediately.
- b. Altitude gain above rope length.
 - 1) Team member to apply braking action - lock off on rope.
 - 2) Wait for rope to return to ground before continuing.
 - 3) Immediately notify the Aircraft Commander.
- c. Entangled rope.
 - 1) Boarding party member will complete descent as rapidly as possible.
 - 2) Rope master to release rope when all boarding party are off the rope.
- d. If a team member is 'hung-on' to the rope, the qualified rope master will make every effort to recover the rope, however the likely option will be to descend to the lowest possible altitude and place the roper on the deck in order that they may be freed.

5. Go/No Go

- a. Determine Go/No Go items that require the mission to be aborted.

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ANNEX B

FRR EQUIPMENT SPECIFICATION DATASHEET (with example)

Applicable Nation: e.g. Germany		
Specification	Equipment type	Notes
Description	e.g. Fast rope	
1 Manufacturers detail	e.g. Aircraft Materials LTD, Brunel Road, Abbot, TQ12 4PE, GBR	
2 Equipment specs, no and type	e.g. AML 15018, MK II (40 ft)	
3 Assembly/ Rigging	e.g. Winch hook	e.g. Using a secondary point
4 Safety/ Limitations	e.g. Hover height max 40 ft	
5 Equipment (rope) dynamics	e.g. Static / Dynamic *	*Erase if not applicable
6 Part Number and/or NATO-Code (NSN)	e.g. 4020-99-774-6276 (40 ft)	
7 National approval (name+ date)	e.g. DEU Certification Branch WTD 61, ML. 16 October 2006	
8 International approval + date	e.g. NLD, dated:	
9 International approval + date	e.g. GBR, dated:	
10 Authorised AC	e.g. Bell UH 1D Sea Lynx MK 88A (60 ft only)	
11 Related documents (SOP)	e.g. SOP Boarding No 34528	
12 Attachments/enclosures	e.g. -National approval certificate -Technical rope manual	
13 Last known international use (country, unit, date)	e.g. BEL, exercise Arfull Issue, 7 Sqn February 2003 GBR, exercise Small Vessel, 25 Sqn. March 2004 ESP, Ex Global warfare, 18 Sqn. July 2004	
14 General remarks		

Note: 1 item per data sheet only

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