

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 17, 2001

NORFOLK, Va. (August 17, 2001) - Last week the Commander, U.S. Marine Corps Forces, Atlantic, Lieutenant General Raymond P. Ayres, Jr., notified eight officers implicated by a DoD Inspector General investigation of the alleged falsification of maintenance records at Marine Medium Tiltrotor Training Squadron (VMMT) 204, New River, N.C. of his intent to conduct non-judicial punishment hearings under Article 15 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

Non-judicial punishment is an authorized disciplinary measure that allows military commanders to address disciplinary infractions. Each officer had the opportunity to either accept or decline the offer to have their cases heard at a non-judicial punishment hearing. In order to protect the privacy of the individuals while they made their decisions, their identities were withheld until today. All eight officers have accepted the Article 15 hearings. It is important to note that the charges are accusations only, all those accused are presumed innocent until proven otherwise. The following officers will undergo Article 15 hearings:

MajGen. Dennis T. Krupp, Commanding General, 2d Marine Aircraft Wing (MAW).

* He is charged with dereliction of duty in that he allegedly knew or should have known of the suspected false MV-22 maintenance reports (Article 92).

Col. Laurin P. Eck, former Assistant Program Manager, Naval Air Systems Command.

* He is charged with violating a lawful order in that he allegedly failed to report offenses which he observed: in this case the suspected falsification of MV-22 maintenance records (Article 92).

Col. James E. Schleining, Commanding Officer, Marine Aircraft Group 26;

Col. Phillip L. Newman, Assistant Chief of Staff for Aviation Logistics Division, 2d MAW;

LtCol. Demetrice M. Babb, Aviation Maintenance Officer, Aviation Logistics Division, 2d MAW.

*All three are charged with dereliction of duty in that they allegedly knew or should have known of the suspected false MV-22 maintenance reports (Article 92).

*All three are charged with violating a lawful order in that they allegedly failed to report offenses which they observed: in this case the suspected falsification of MV-22 maintenance records (Article 92).

LtCol. Odin F. Leberman, former Commanding Officer, VMMT-204;

Capt. Christopher Ramsey, Assistant Aviation Maintenance Officer, VMMT-204.

* Both are charged with dereliction of duty in that they allegedly knew or should have known of the suspected false MV-22 maintenance reports (Article 92).

* Both are charged with making false official statements. They allegedly wrongfully and with the intent to deceive, forwarded up the chain of command false MV-22 maintenance reports (Article 107).

* Both are charged with conduct unbecoming an officer. They allegedly wrongfully and dishonorably ordered the Marines under their command to falsify MV-22 maintenance reports (Article 133).

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Matthew W. Smith, Maintenance Material Control Officer, VMMT-204.

* He is charged with dereliction of duty in that he allegedly knew or should have known of the suspected false MV-22 maintenance reports (Article 92).

* He is charged with making a false official statement. He allegedly wrongfully and with the intent to deceive, forwarded up the chain of command false MV-22 maintenance reports (Article 107).

LtGen Ayres will conduct each non-judicial hearing. At the hearing, each officer will be afforded the opportunity to present evidence on his behalf or to rebut the charges. They are also allowed to make personal statements. The Commander will then consider all the facts and circumstances surrounding each case. He can dismiss all or part of the charges, impose non-judicial punishment if the accused is found to be guilty, or refer all charges to a Court Martial. This latter measure can be taken either at the direction of the Commander or at the request of the individual Marine charged.

The dates and locations for the Article 15 hearings have not yet been scheduled.

The DODIG report, as well as the other official mishap investigations, make clear that there is no link between the alleged falsification of maintenance records within VMMT-204 and the previous MV-22 Osprey mishaps.

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