



## Museum receives MH-53 Pave Low for display

by Lee Anne Hensly  
Hilltop Times

9/19/2008 - **HILL AIR FORCE BASE, Utah** -- The Hill Aerospace Museum received a MH-53M Pave Low helicopter on Sept. 18. It was the last of its kind in the Air Force's continental U.S. inventory.

The Air Force has retired the special operations helicopter and the MH-53M models will now become static displays in Air Force museums nationwide.

Hill Air Force Base first received this particular helicopter, tail number 68-10367, in 1971, but three years later the helicopter was reassigned to Hickam Air Force Base to recover film canisters ejected by Project Corona, a satellite reconnaissance mission launched in the 1960s.

The helicopter was delivered from Hurlburt Field in Florida by two pilots and two flight engineers who flew the MH-53M during their active duty service in the Air Force. Rick Simmon was one of the first flight engineers to test the Pave Low system and was a flight instructor at Hill AFB for two years.

"It's been a long time since I've been here," Simmon said shortly after landing. "Everything is still the same, there are just different airplanes."

Simmon has more than 7,800 hours of helicopter time and received two flying crosses and two silver stars during his service in the Air Force. He now works for ARINC and resides in Florida.

Pilot Jim "Pappy" Walters and co-pilot Tom Aldrich were maintenance test pilots together for the MH-53M in Panama and Kuwait.

"We've been doing all the test flight work (on the Pave Lows) since '91," Aldrich said. "This was our last flight. We're done."

Aldrich said the Air Force still has six active Pave Lows in the Middle East, which will also be retired shortly. The Air Force wanted the last Pave Lows to fly their final hours in combat missions before finally resting in the archives of Air Force history.

The MH-53 Pave Lows flew low-level, long-range missions and was the largest and technically advanced helicopter in the Air Force inventory. These helicopters served special operations missions and carried a combination of 7.62 mini guns or three .50 caliber machine guns. The MH-53M will still be active in Army and Navy inventories.



The MH-53M Pave Low Helicopter, tail number 68-10367, arrived here from Hurlburt Field, Fla., Sept. 18 to be moved to the Hill Aerospace Museum for display. Hill Air Force Base was the first base the helicopter was ever assigned to. (U.S. Air Force Photo by Todd Cromar)

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