

PSP.

Ron Mitchell, from the 9Sqn Association, is looking for some PSP. He says “The organisation for which I work, ([Careflight Helicopter Service](#)) is trying to locate some PSP which it would like to buy. So far we have been unsuccessful within Australia (no problems if we lived in the USA or Europe but freight is just a little too expensive).”

If you know where there is some, or if you have any information on where to get some, please get in touch with Ron at ronm@careflight.org.au.



PSP, or Marsden Matting to give it its correct name, is a standardized, perforated steel matting material originally developed by the United States at the Waterways Experiment Station shortly before World War II, primarily for the rapid construction of temporary runways and landing strips and was first used in November 1941. The material was also used in the Korean and Vietnam Wars where its common name, from its [NSN nomenclature](#), is pierced (or perforated) steel planking or PSP.



A single piece weighs about 30 kg, is 3.0 m long and 380 mm wide. The hole pattern for the sheet was 3 holes wide by 29 holes long resulting in 87 holes per mat.

Marsden Matting was extensively used during World War II by [Seabees](#) (Construction Battalions – CB's) and other front line construction personnel to build runways and other readily usable surfaces over all kinds of terrain in the Pacific Theater of Operations. A C-47 Skytrain supply aircraft was the first plane to land on the first steel-mat runway constructed in France after the Invasion of Normandy.

On Pacific islands the matting was typically covered with crushed and rolled coral or soil to form a level surface. The perforated and channelled design of the matting created strength and rigidity and facilitated drainage. A runway two hundred feet (60 metres) wide and 5,000 feet (1500 metres) long could be created within two days by a small team of engineers. (that's about 79,000 sheets of PSP, weighing 2,370 tonnes – you wonder how they ever got it in there in the first place...)



At the start of the Berlin Airlift the runways at Tempelhof Airport in the US Zone in Berlin were made of PSP. Designed to support fighters and smaller cargo aircraft, the [C-54 Skymaster](#) that formed the backbone of the U.S. effort was too heavy for the PSP. Berliners were hired to fix

the runway between the three-minute arrivals, running onto the runways with bags of sand to dump onto the mats and soften the surface.

Large quantities of matting were produced; approximately 2 million tons costing more than US\$200 million (in the 1940s). At the end of the war a large amount of the material remained as war surplus and was pressed into use in various civil engineering applications such as road and bridge construction. As they were made from steel with a high manganese content, the matting was also highly resistant to corrosion. In various countries located in the Pacific Theatre, particularly New Guinea, matting still remains in use as fencing or roadway barriers, in some cases stretching for miles.

A blonde phones the fire brigade and says her house is on fire.

The fireman asks 'how do we get there?'

'HELLOO!' she replies, 'In the big red truck of course!'

F16 V's bird.

This is an amazing 45 second video of what happens to a single engined F16 fighter aircraft after it "eats" a bird. You may have to replay it a couple of times to see the bird that entered the engine. Go to large screen if you can.



The video is actual footage taken from the cockpit of an F-16 and demonstrates the cool reaction and professionalism of the two pilots. The F-16 engine ingests a bird soon after takeoff at Tyndall AFB in the US. The aircraft is being flown by an instructor pilot in the rear and a student in the front seat and the video is seen through the aircraft's Heads Up Display (HUD). You can see the bird flash by just prior to impacting the engine. You can also hear the aircraft voice warning system telling the crew they have a problem and referring to the "D-6 NL" which means there is no engine RPM.

The crew made two attempts to relight the jet engine, but evidently there was too much damage from the bird strike and they had to eject. They stayed with and flew the aircraft longer than one would expect before ejecting. Airspeed can be observed on the HUD's upper left corner. It goes down to the low 120's as they struggle to get the engine going again, but as the plane noses over and dives to earth it increases to at least 175 just before impact. It just goes to show how quickly your day can go to pieces – about a minute from take off to ejection.

The crew ran the Emergency Checklist, made two relight attempts and picked out a ploughed field for impact before ejecting. You can follow the audio attached to the video and hear the conversation between the trainee pilot and instructor and then between ATC and the aircraft, including the pilot saying they were punching out. The ATC bloke in the tower didn't seem to completely understand what was happening and missed the significance of the last transmission as his last call was to an empty aircraft.

The video continues until impact, a classic "buying the farm" as you can see the plough rows get bigger. A real nice job from the aircrew, they kept their cool and turned the aircraft away from populated areas. No one was hurt but that old bird did cost the US taxpayer quite a "few" million dollars!

You can watch the video [HERE](#)



Cpl Ernie Gimm and Lac Ron Vernon, at the Comms Centre in Vung Tau 1966/67.

Baptizing an Irishman

A Irish man is stumbling through the woods, totally drunk, when he comes upon a preacher baptizing people in the river. He proceeds to walk into the water and subsequently bumps into the preacher. The preacher turns around and is almost knocked flat by the smell of alcohol, whereupon he says to the drunk, 'Are you ready to find Jesus?' The drunk shouts, 'Yes, oi am.' So the preacher grabs him and dunks him in the water. He pulls him up and says to the drunk, 'Brother have you found Jesus?' The drunk replies, 'No, oi haven't found Jesus.' The preacher shocked at the answer, dunks him into the water again for a little longer. He again pulls him out of the water and asks again, 'Have you found Jesus yet me brother?' The drunk again answers, 'No, oi I haven't found Jesus.' By this time the preacher is at his wits end and dunks the drunk in the water again --- but this time holds him down for about 30 seconds and when he begins kicking his arms and legs he pulls him up. The preacher again asks the drunk, 'For the love of God have you found Jesus ?' The drunk wipes his eyes and catches his breath and says to the preacher, 'No I haven't mate, are you sure this is where he fell in?'



Gerry Walsh sent us these photos,

Above is an old disused WW11 airstrip just out of Butterworth, which was used mainly for pilot training for landings and drops etc.

Even then, there was still a few unsavoury people hiding within the tree line, which didn't give the aircrew a really good feeling.....





Gerry, at Butterworth, 1975.