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We're gonna need that door hinge, curator.



Patriots Point

By Eric Tegler Mar 25, 2016

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Conventional wisdom says America has the best-equipped military in the world. But sometimes you have to wonder. Personnel from Marine Corp Air Station Beaufort, South Carolina recently went to a museum in search a part they needed to get one of their older F/A-18 Hornets flyable, according to a report this week from [BreakingDefense](#).

"WE GOT AN EMAIL FROM THE MILITARY ASKING IF THEY COULD HAVE THE FORWARD LEFT NOSE LANDING GEAR DOOR HINGE FROM THE F/A-18 ON THE YORKTOWN'S DECK."

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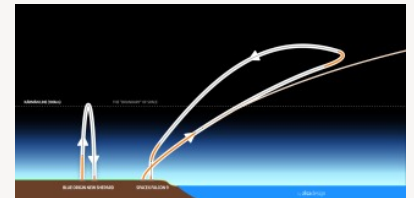
During a meeting of the House Armed Services Committee last Tuesday which included Defense Secretary Ashton Carter and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs Gen. Joe Dunford, Committee Chairman Mac Thornberry (R-TX) mentioned that during a recent visit to MCAS Beaufort he'd heard a story about Marines scrounging parts for an F/A-18 from a museum. Thornberry used the story to illustrate a point about declining military readiness. BreakingDefense provided further detail, explaining that the Marines were in search of a part that was on an F/A-18A that flew in the raid against Libya in 1986.

The part in question was not on hand at Beaufort and is no longer manufactured. The Marines first

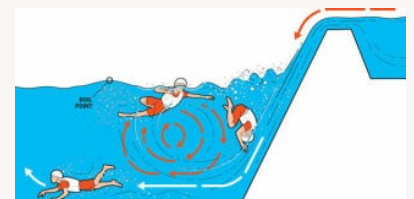
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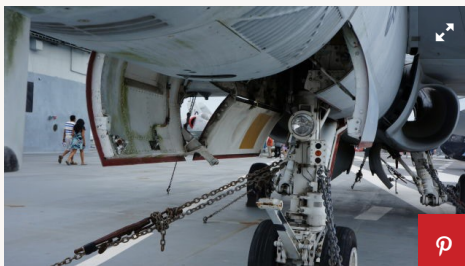
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went to check retired F/A-18s on display at MCAS Beaufort but didn't find it. Then a Marine Lt Colonel visiting the USS Yorktown (a retired aircraft carrier part of the Patriots Point Naval and Maritime Museum) in nearby Charleston noted a similar vintage F/A-18A on deck and informed the Beaufort contingent about it.

"We got an email from the military asking if they could have the forward left nose landing gear door hinge from the F/A-18 on [the Yorktown's] deck," says Patriots Point spokesman Chris Hauff. "The Hornet, [Bureau no. 162435] is on loan to us from the National Naval Aviation Museum and they asked if the Marines could come out and take a look at it. They sent a team out here and removed the part, but it turns out they weren't able to use it."



The Marines needed an old landing gear door hinge.

Patriots Point

Hauff says that the Museum has never had a request like this, but that they were happy to help. "Any way that our museum can help, we will." That's good to know. On the other hand, this story illustrates the state of Marine Corps aviation. The Marines fly some of the oldest fighter aircraft in the military thanks in part to their advocacy of the F-35. The service has forgone modernizing its Hornets and Harriers in order to save money for the F-35B, which can't come soon enough.

See the Conversation!

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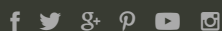
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