

DOCUMENT RESUME

05228 - [B0685608] (~~CONFIDENTIAL~~)

RELEASED  
4/7/78

Navy Needs To Establish Tighter Controls To Prevent Unauthorized Personnel from Obtaining Leather Flight Jackets. LCD-78-411; B-133177. March 7, 1978. 7 pp.

Report to Rep. Lionel Van Deerlin; by Robert C. Rothwell (for Fred J. Shafer, Director, Logistics and Communications Div.).

Issue Area: Facilities and Material Management: Requirements for Equipment, Spare Parts and Supplies (702); Federal Procurement of Goods and Services: Procurement of Only Needed Quantities of Goods (1901).

Contact: Logistics and Communications Div.

Budget Function: National Defense: Department of Defense - Military (except procurement & contracts) (051).

Organization Concerned: Department of the Navy: Naval Supply Center, San Diego, CA; Department of Defense.

Congressional Relevance: Rep. Lionel Van Deerlin.

A Navy Master Chief stationed in the San Diego area alleged that the Navy is wasting operations and maintenance funds by issuing leather aviation flight jackets to unauthorized personnel. Inadequate controls exist for requisitioning and issuing leather flight jackets. These jackets were issued to such unauthorized personnel as shipboard personnel, non-flying officers assigned to air squadrons, retiring naval personnel, and "VIPs." Air squadrons circumvent station supply channels by requisitioning unauthorized items directly from the Naval Supply Center in San Diego. The Navy should: process requisitions from aircraft squadrons through established station supply channels instead of sending them directly to supply centers, have naval supply centers program existing equipment to reject automatically requisitions for aviation items from units with non-aviation activity codes, direct station supply and squadron supply personnel to enforce the policy of turning in a leather flight jacket when a new one is issued, and stop the practice of giving aviation items to unauthorized personnel and visiting dignitaries. (RRS)

5604



**RESTRICTED** — Not to be released outside the General Accounting Office except on the basis of specific approval by the Office of Congressional Relations.

**UNITED STATES GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE**

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20548

RELEASED  
4/7/78

MAR 7 1978

LOGISTICS AND COMMUNICATIONS  
DIVISION

B-133177

The Honorable Lionel Van Deerlin  
House of Representatives

Dear Mr. Van Deerlin:

In your letter of September 7, 1977, you asked that we investigate the Navy's procedures for issuing leather aviator flight jackets. Your letter was prompted by a suggestion from a Navy Master Chief stationed in the San Diego area, who said the Navy is wasting operations and maintenance funds issuing these jackets to personnel not authorized to have them. He also noted that less expensive foul weather gear is available in lieu of the leather jackets, and that these are to be accounted for when a man is transferred to a new unit.

We discussed this matter with Navy officials in Washington and with officials of the Defense Personnel Support Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. We have also reviewed the procedures and controls at selected naval activities in the San Diego area.

In San Diego we found inadequate controls for requisitioning and issuing leather flight jackets. In some cases, even the limited controls maintained were circumvented. Leather flight jackets were issued to Navy personnel who were not authorized to have them.

We found examples of leather flight jackets being issued to shipboard personnel, non-flying officers assigned to air squadrons, retiring naval personnel, and "VIP" dignitaries. According to Naval Supply Manual Vol. II, these individuals are ineligible to receive a leather flight jacket. We believe that unauthorized personnel should not receive these jackets.

We realize it is difficult to eliminate all abuses from a supply system. However, the issuance of leather flight

LCD-78-411  
(947319)

jackets in the San Diego area is extravagant and indicates that the Navy needs more stringent controls to correct these abuses.

Your office requested that written comments not be obtained from the Navy. We have, however, obtained agency response by way of informal conferences, and have considered these comments in the report.

#### BACKGROUND

The Defense Personnel Support Center in Philadelphia is the central inventory control point for leather flight jackets and is responsible for procuring these jackets. The jackets are stocked at nine naval supply centers throughout the United States, including one in San Diego. The established procedures require naval aircraft squadrons to requisition flight jackets from one of these nine locations through established station supply channels. Ships requisition all items directly from naval supply centers.

Personnel eligible to receive leather flight jackets according to the Naval Supply Manual Vol. II are "naval aviators, naval aviation observers (controller, navigator, or radar), naval aviation pilots, naval flight surgeons (while in a flight status), naval aviation operators (anti-submarine warfare), student pilot personnel\* \* \*" or "personnel designated as non-pilot crew members."

The number of leather flight jackets issued during the last 8 fiscal years has ranged from a high of 37,692 jackets in 1971 to a low of 24,835 jackets in 1976 as shown in the following table.

<u>Fiscal year</u>	<u>Quantity</u>
1970	34,338
1971	37,692
1972	34,479
1973	31,143
1974	29,386
1975	31,907
1976	24,835
1977	26,177

This represents an average of over 31,000 jackets issued each year. Navy officials said approximately 15,000

personnel are in flight status in any given year. Thus, it is obvious the system is being abused and the number of jackets far exceed the requirements.

Each leather flight jacket currently costs \$51. Thus, the Navy spends about \$1.5 million annually to procure these jackets. The cost is charged to the Operations and Maintenance account of the squadron or ship requisitioning the jackets.

#### MORE EFFECTIVE CONTROLS ARE NEEDED

The Navy classifies aviation clothing, including flight jackets, as limited or restricted use garments. In July 1977, the Naval Supply Systems Command sent a message to all Air and Surface commands calling attention to the restrictions on requisitioning and issuing leather flight jackets. The commands were asked to review details of the restrictions and to examine compliance to these restrictions in annual supply inspections.

As late as December 1977, flight jackets were still being issued without authorization. Navy squadrons were requisitioning leather flight jackets directly from the Naval Supply Center in San Diego to avoid the usual scrutiny of station supply policies and procedures. Personnel assigned to naval ships without aviation complements are requisitioning and receiving unauthorized flight jackets.

#### Aviation activities

Squadron VF-124 at Naval Air Station, Miramar, has an established "pool" of jackets which are given to visiting dignitaries. As of October 27, 1977, there were 17 leather flight jackets and 5 nylon flight jackets in the pool. The VF-124 Supply Officer said he submitted requisitions to the supply center to replenish their stock of jackets.

Requisitioning jackets directly from the supply center circumvents controls established by station supply at the Naval Air Station, Miramar, which require

--exchanging an old jacket for the new jacket, if it is a reissue,

--reviewing a commanding officer's certification of aircrew's current flight gear list, and

--reviewing requisition forms for appropriate signatures.

Furthermore, Naval Supply Manual Vol. II does not contain any reference or instruction for establishing a pool of flight jackets to be given away to visiting dignitaries. The manual states that when an individual not eligible requires flight clothing for flight purposes, such items will be furnished from a flight clothing pool. The instructions also require that the individual return the items to the pool.

A squadron official told us that requisitions are submitted to the supply center directly rather than going through authorized channels--the station supply--because requisitions are not scrutinized as thoroughly. The Center, for example, does not require exchange of an old jacket for a new one.

Another squadron (VF-111) at Naval Air Station, Miramar, also ordered jackets for unauthorized personnel from the Center. According to the VF-111 Supply Officer, jackets were requisitioned for two retiring Chief Petty Officers and two non-aviation officers. The VF-111 Commanding Officer indicated that he had authorized all Chief Petty Officers' and commissioned officers' leather flight jackets regardless of flight status. He felt that these individuals were part of an aviation squadron and were authorized to receive jackets. Again, this is contrary to Naval Supply Manual Vol. II (paragraph 25842, subparagraph 3), which states that when an individual not eligible (i.e., not an aviator or crew member) requires flight clothing for flight purposes, such items will be furnished from a flight clothing pool. When there is a break of more than 5 days in continuous duty involving the flights for which the clothing is needed, the individual will return the items to the pool.

After we brought these matters to the attention of the wing commanding officer responsible for the VF-124 and VF-111 squadrons, he issued an instruction to correct these problems. The instruction stated in part:

"All naval air stations are responsible for providing supply support to tenant activities. . . Frequently, squadrons have submitted requisitions directly to various other supply agencies utilizing improper

funding procedures, incorrect data on requisitions, and often, for unauthorized material. Results are mismanagement of funds and poor material support."

This instruction required that all squadron or unit requisitions be submitted to the Naval Air Station Miramar Supply Department. Furthermore, it stated that aviator equipment items, such as flight jackets, sunglasses, etc., will be ordered only through the Naval Air Station Miramar flight gear issuance branch in accordance with established procedures.

Station instructions at both Miramar and North Island require individuals to turn in an old jacket when requisitioning a replacement. However, these instructions are not enforced at all levels. One squadron operating at the North Island Naval Air Station issued two jackets to the same individual. The Supply Officer of HS-4, a North Island squadron, said in this case a jacket was not turned in, nor were records available to identify the need for replacement.

Miramar and North Island squadrons also use different procedures for recording and controlling issuance of flight jackets. The Chief of Naval Operations has designated the NATOPS Flight Personnel Training and Qualification Jacket as the appropriate document for retaining a record of flight clothing. Miramar squadrons use the NATOPS jacket to record issuances. North Island squadrons use another form. The Naval Supply Systems Command, however, is developing a new control document to be used by all naval units.

On December 14, 1977, the Commander, Naval Air Force Pacific, sent a message to his aviation components (including Miramar and North Island) stating that recent inspections and audits showed that aviation items were requisitioned for unauthorized purposes such as mementos or to accent the appearance of naval personnel. He said that some items by their very nature lend themselves to unauthorized procurement and use--flying boots, flight jackets, sunglasses and aviator watches. The Commander's message said that in the absence of explicit authorization, procurement or use of such items will not be condoned. All wing commanders are to make a concerted effort to prevent and discourage procurement or use of materials for unauthorized purposes.

Non-aviation activities

Personnel in non-aviation activities requisitioned 42 (over 20 percent) of the 200 jackets the Naval Supply Center in San Diego issued in September 1977. Seven of the 42 were issued to ships under the cognizance of the Commander, Naval Surface Force, U.S. Pacific Fleet. Surface Force instructions state that its ships are not authorized to requisition flight jackets for ship personnel.

In addition to our analysis, Surface Force officials completed a special review 1/ in November 1977 which revealed that 23 of its ships requisitioned 201 jackets from the San Diego Center from January to October 1977. All except two of the ships were homeported in the Southern California area. Ships stationed away from their homeport (e.g., at Alameda, San Francisco, Oakland, or Pearl Harbor) normally requisition items through the nearest supply center, such as Alameda or Pearl Harbor. The Surface Force official who performed the review said he did not study requisitions submitted to other supply centers.

Surface Force officials sent letters to each of the ships that had violated requisitioning authority. They asked that shipboard controls be reviewed and appropriate action be taken to restrict issuance of flight jackets.

A Surface Force official said annual inspections (recently revised to 18-month intervals) have been made of ship requisitioning procedures, which include examining the unauthorized procurement of flight jackets. He stated that this is the only way to monitor ship requisitioning activities because the ships requisition all items directly from the Naval Supply Center in San Diego.

Since these inspections do not control requisitions, an alternative would be to have ship requisitions screened by the supply centers on a random basis. Currently, the San Diego Center does not screen requisitions for flight jackets at all. Random screening would reinforce the inspection process.

---

1/ This review was performed at the request of the Naval Supply Center in San Diego, based on the potential problem we brought to their attention. We had first visited the Center in late October 1977 but did not get to the Surface Force activity until early December 1977.

In conclusion, the Navy needs to maintain tighter control over the issuance of leather flight jackets. Navy activities--aviation and non-aviation--are requisitioning jackets for unauthorized personnel, including shipboard personnel, non-flying officers assigned to air squadrons, retiring naval personnel, and "VIP" dignitaries.

Air squadrons circumvent station supply channels and requisition unauthorized items directly from the Naval Supply Center in San Diego. Personnel assigned to ships without an aviation complement are requisitioning flight jackets.


Our suggestions for improving controls over aviation items are to

- process requisitions from aircraft squadrons through established station supply channels instead of sending them directly to supply centers,
- have naval supply centers program existing equipment to automatically reject requisitions for aviation items from units with non-aviation activity codes cited,
- direct station supply and squadron supply personnel to enforce the policy of turning in a leather flight jacket when a new one is issued, and
- stop the practice of giving aviation items to unauthorized personnel, including visiting dignitaries.

As agreed with your office, we are sending copies of this report to the Secretary of the Navy to initiate corrective action. We will follow up at a later date to see what the Navy has done to correct this problem.

We plan no further distribution of this report until 30 days from the date of the report. At that time, we will send copies to interested parties and make copies available to others upon request.

Sincerely yours,

  
for Fred J. Shafer  
Director