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**FIRE-FIGHTING SYSTEMS HELP
PROTECT PUERTO RICAN BASE**

Aguadilla, P.R. – Mobile fire-fighting systems are protecting hangars at the Rafael Hernandez International Airport, the former Ramey Air Force Base for a fraction of the cost of a conventional sprinkler system.

Built by Fire Combat a division of Sensor Electronics, the fire suppression systems are stand-alone automatic units that punch out 500 gallons of AFFF foam to protect a score of military helicopters.

Each self-contained system has its own sensitive fire detector that reacts in milliseconds to a flash fire or explosion. In addition, four ceiling-mounted detectors are also standing guard for fire.

Best of all, the fire suppression systems are completely unmanned, giving the base 24-hour protection without on-duty firemen. In case of fire, alarms are automatically relayed to the local fire department.

The base refurbishes surplus U.S. Army Cobra and Huey helicopters. Engines and running gear are repaired and renovated, electronics updated, bodies and

rotors sandblasted and repainted. Then these good-as-new helicopters are available to various foreign governments.

At any one time up to 20 helicopters are stored in base hangars. For fire protection, each hangar is divided into two zones, with a single system assigned to cover each zone.

The fire-fighting systems give enhanced protection plus significant cost advantages, says Scott Hornick, Executive Vice President of Fire Combat. "To install a conventional overhead sprinkler system – what with all the heads, pipes, pumps, tanks and power wiring – would have cost maybe 10 times as much. So going with this setup saves 90 cents on every fire-protection dollar."

Moreover, continues Hornick, it would take days if not weeks to install a conventional system. Instead the fire suppression systems are simply wheeled into position, giving the base fully operational fire protection in minutes.

Another plus is that these systems can be placed anywhere in a hangar, or even moved from hangar to hangar as needs change. They can also be positioned outdoors to guard parked helicopters.

The systems sophisticated fire detectors focus only on actual blazes, ignoring false alarms from arc welders, lightning flashes, fluorescent lamps and other spurious signals.

Each fire suppression system carries 500 gallons of AFFF concentrate, twin 400-cubic-foot cylinders carrying a nitrogen propellant, oscillating swivel turret, and even a solar panel to power the entire rig.