

tance and necessity of the fire service, a new building was absolutely necessary. "It will be a state-of-the-art facility and it will greatly contribute to the Grantley Adams International Airport becoming the number one airport in this region."

The standards set by the ICAO were highlighted by Minister of Transport, Works and International Transport, John Boyce, who said that the groundbreaking ceremony which took place yesterday emphasized the consistent interest in ensuring that all aspects of airport operations were maintained in accordance with international standards. "The main purpose of an airport fire station is to save lives in the event of airport accidents," said Boyce, who added that persons must recognise that the possibility of a fire at the airport does exist.

He continued to say that the station has already been equipped with the latest equipment to respond to a wide range of situations, including terrorism. He highlighted the presence of fire tenders at the station which he said were specially designed to deal with aircraft fires.

The location of the airport fire station was deemed to be extremely important, and the specific location was chosen to minimize response time. "Barbados is tending to be a category one airport," said Boyce, adding that it was very important to maintain the very high standards set by the various international bodies. The new location of the fire station will correct any deficiency and will also meet the ICAO requirements regarding maximum response time for an air side tender to an accident occurring at the farthest area within the confines of the perimeter fencing.

Acting Chief Fire Officer, Anthony Blackman, also expressed his delight for the new facility.

"This ultra modern station will provide the right environment so the officers can seek to further develop themselves as well as improve the efficiency of the operations here at the airport fire station," said Blackman.

He continued to say that the importance of the airport fire station cannot be overlooked since the services provided were an essential component of the day-to-day operations of the airport. These services provided include refuelling, weather and emergency standbys. He said that the airport fire station responded to 38 refuelling standbys and 11 emergency standbys in 2005. So far for the year, 31 refuelling standbys and 5 emergency standbys were recorded.

The location and design of this new fire station will positively affect the response to the above incidents and improve the living conditions of the officers

posted here, added Blackman.

ARFF PREPARES FOR SPACE SHUTTLE LANDING

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION CHERRY POINT, NORTH CAROLINA (USA) - Cpl. Brent D. Kottke spent his Saturday waiting for a space shuttle to land on June 14.

MCAS Cherry Point's longest runway is approximately 8,000 ft, thus making it an alternate landing site for the space shuttle.

The Marines at Cherry Point's Aircraft Rescue and Firefighting Space Shuttle Support Program receive training to prepare themselves in the event the space shuttle was to land here.

"The training we received was pretty intense," said Kottke, a rescueman with ARFF. "Although we have to come in on our days off to be on stand by for the space shuttle, in essence, it makes me feel like I'm needed as a vital part of the space shuttle's mission." Before every space shuttle launch, the Marines receive a brief and radio check to ensure communication and details are passed before the actual launch. "We pre-stage about an hour before the space shuttle is scheduled to take off because the space shuttle travels so fast, we need to be prepared at a moment's notice," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Ramon Perez, the Officer-in-Charge of Cherry Point's ARFF. "Every time the space shuttle has a scheduled mission to take off or land, our Space Shuttle Support Program here are on stand-by."

In addition to the ARFF Marines, the provost marshal's office, fire department, emergency medical services, Environmental Affairs Department and facilities maintenance are on stand-by as well.

Alternate landing sites include Atlantic City, Dover Air Force Base, Naval Air Station Oceana, MacDill AFB, Otis AFB, Gabreski Airport and Pease International Airport.

"We're on stand-by about every other month supporting the space shuttle mission," said Perez. "The shuttle is usually up anywhere from 7-14 days." The Marines of Cherry Point's ARFF Space Shuttle Support Program receive a four-day training session at Cape Canaveral in Coco Beach, Florida on rescue procedure exercises and astronaut equipment.

"It's an awesome experience being able to take part of the space shuttle program," said Cpl. William H. Foster, a rescueman with ARFF. "There are only so many people who get to take part in this, and it's very