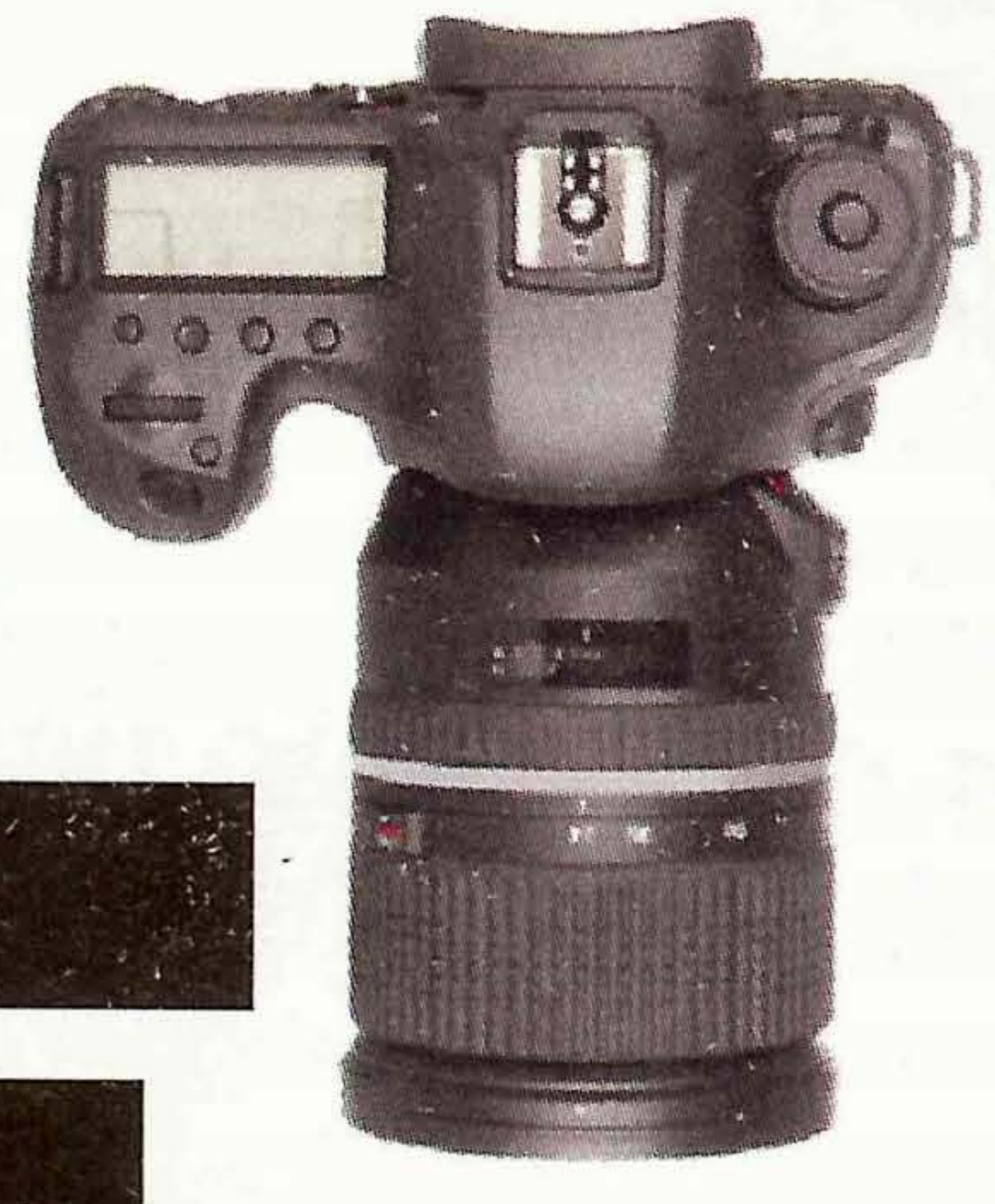
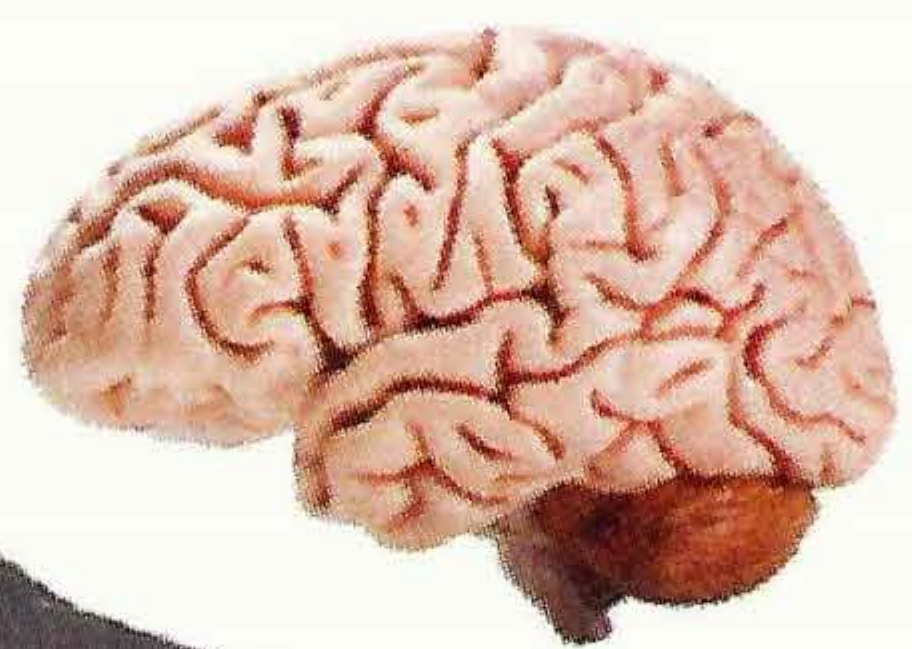


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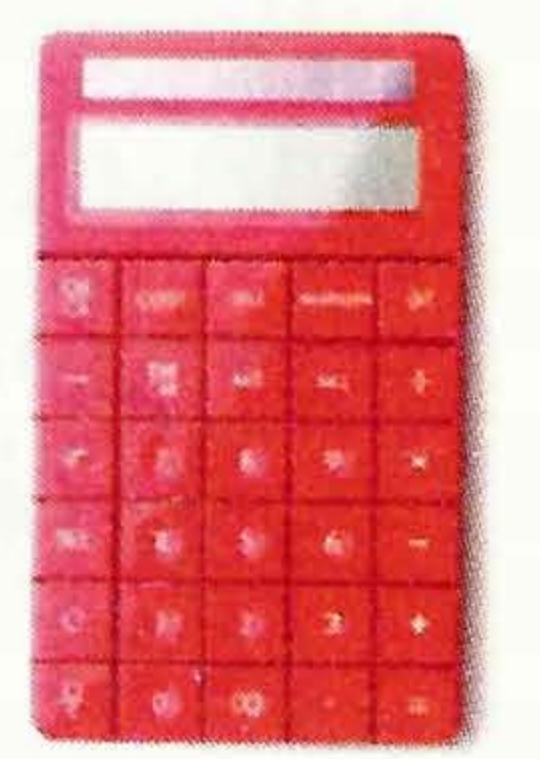
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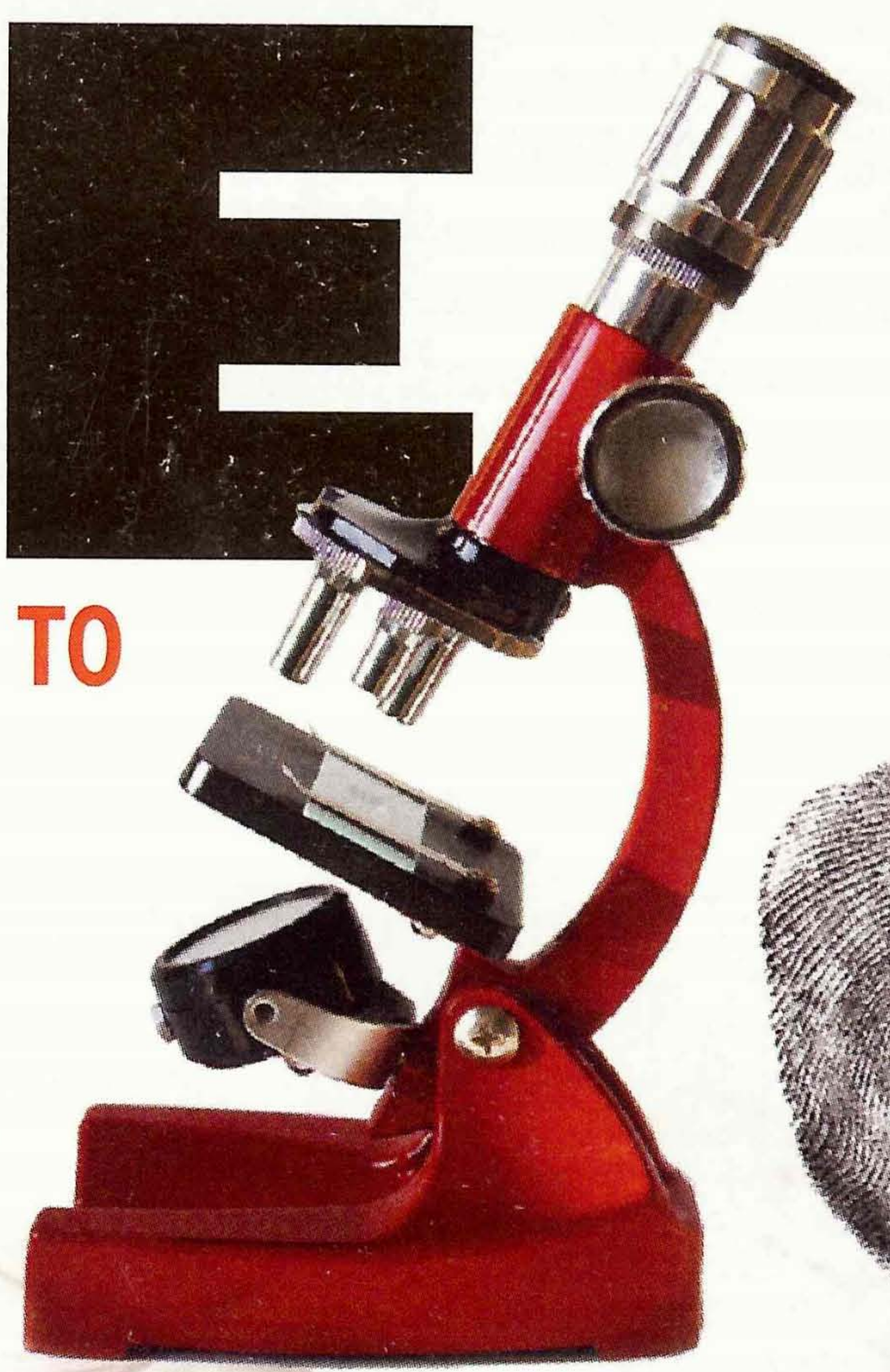
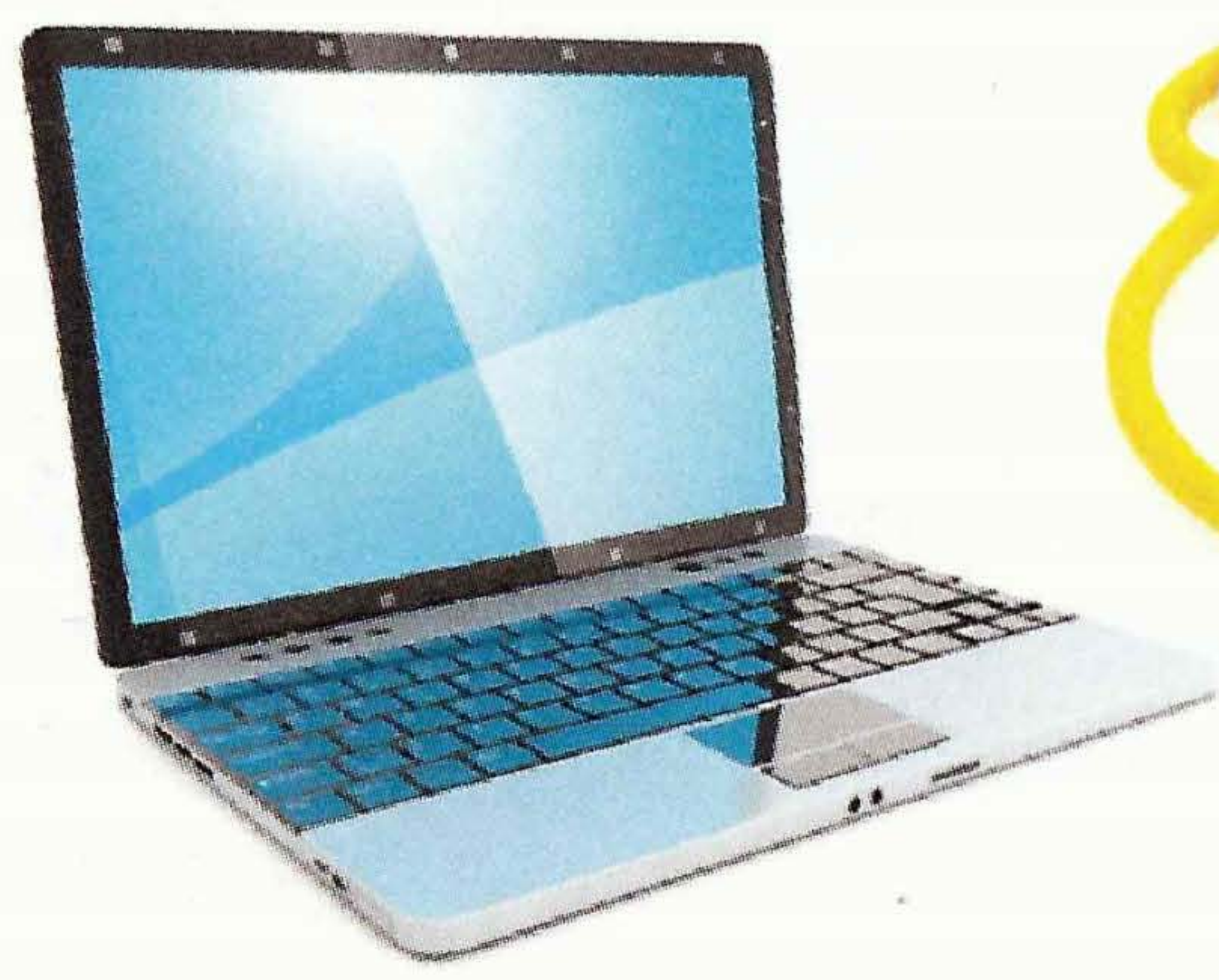
EXPLORE

YOUR

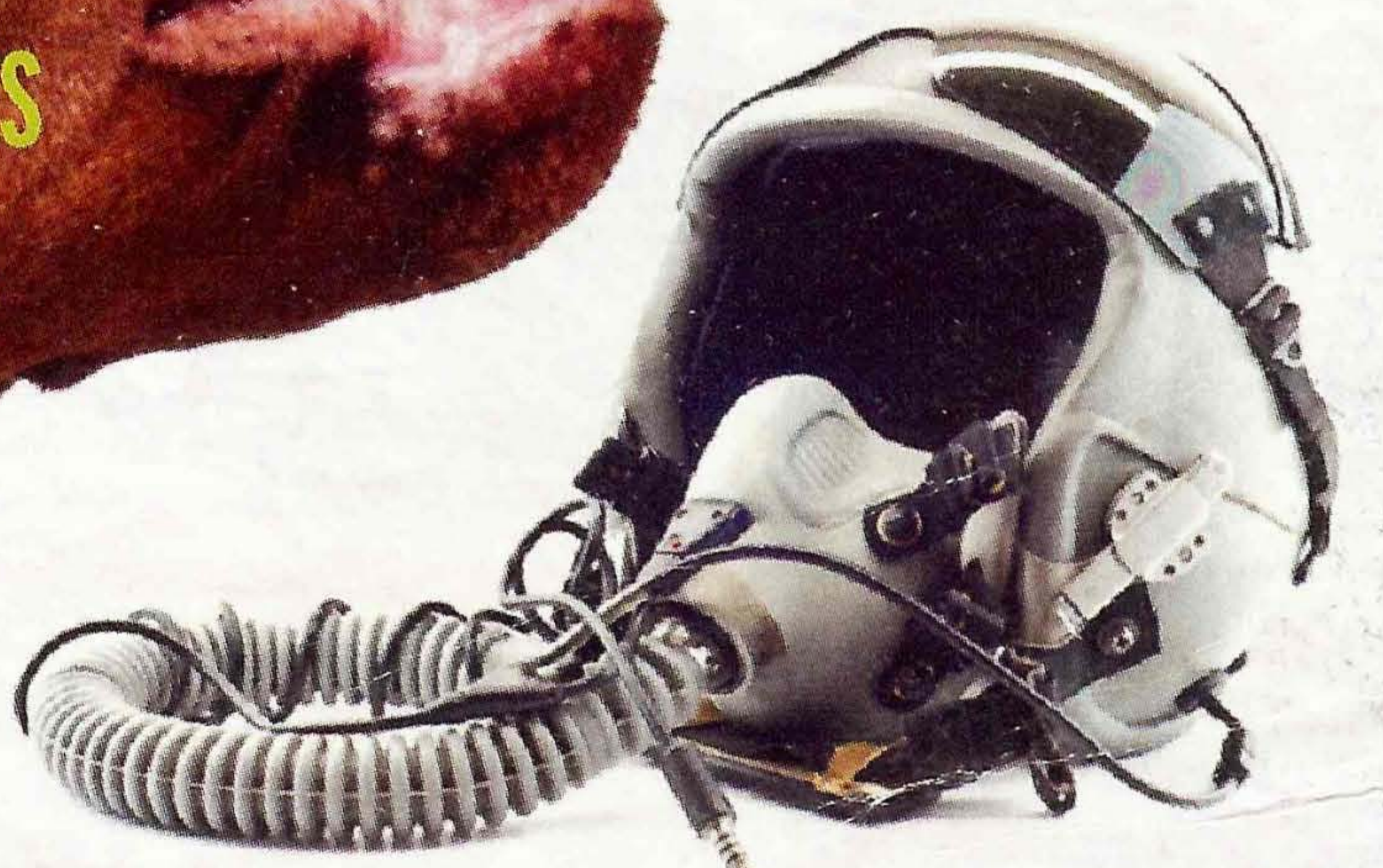
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INSIDE

JOB

The **EXPLORING** program gives you a behind-the-scenes view of a career that could be right for you. BY AARON DERR





Some people know the answer when they're little. Some people don't figure it out until later. (Sometimes *much* later.)

It's a question all of us are asked at some point: "What do you want to be when you grow up?"

Whether you already have a good idea or no idea at all — or even if you're just looking for something fun to do in your spare time — the Exploring program is for you.

Unlike Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Venturing and Sea Scout units, coed Exploring posts focus on careers. There are posts that can give Explorers a realistic idea of what it's like to be a police officer. There are posts that focus on emergency medical services (EMS). There are posts that give you a chance to work in the fields of health care, law, aviation and engineering.

If you can do it as a job, chances are there's an Exploring post for it. **CONTINUED>>>**

Exploring offers hands-on experience in the following career fields:

ARTS AND HUMANITIES

AVIATION

BUSINESS

COMMUNICATIONS

ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY

FIRE AND EMS

HEALTH CARE

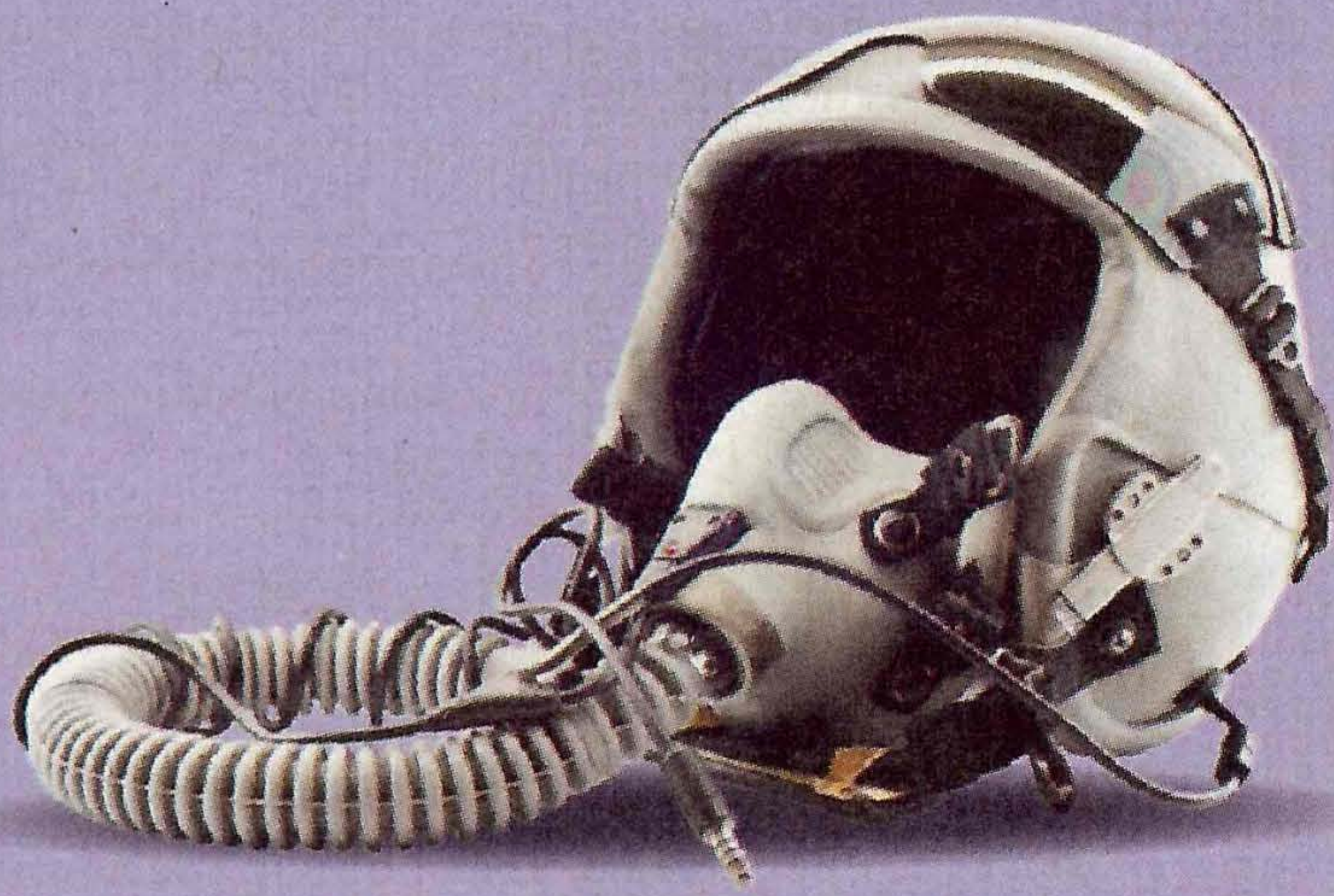
LAW AND GOVERNMENT

LAW ENFORCEMENT

SCIENCE

SKILLED TRADES

SOCIAL SERVICES



AIR FORCE EXPLORERS

When Vick Mendoza was a freshman in high school, he signed up for Junior ROTC. That was how he first became interested in the military.

Since then, he has joined the official U.S. Air Force Explorers post in Phoenix, Arizona.

“Once I joined the Air Force Explorers, I knew this was something I wanted to do,” says Vick, now 19 and a cadet second lieutenant in his post. “I knew I wanted to make a career in the military.”

The Air Force Explorers meet six to eight times each month at an actual U.S. Air Force installation. During the week, they focus on training — both academically and physically.

“I never in my life thought I’d be learning about surface-to-air missile systems and intercontinental ballistic missiles and things of that nature,” Vick says.



The U.S. Air Force Explorers post in Phoenix gives members the chance to experience real Air Force training.



On weekends, they go outside and really get to work.

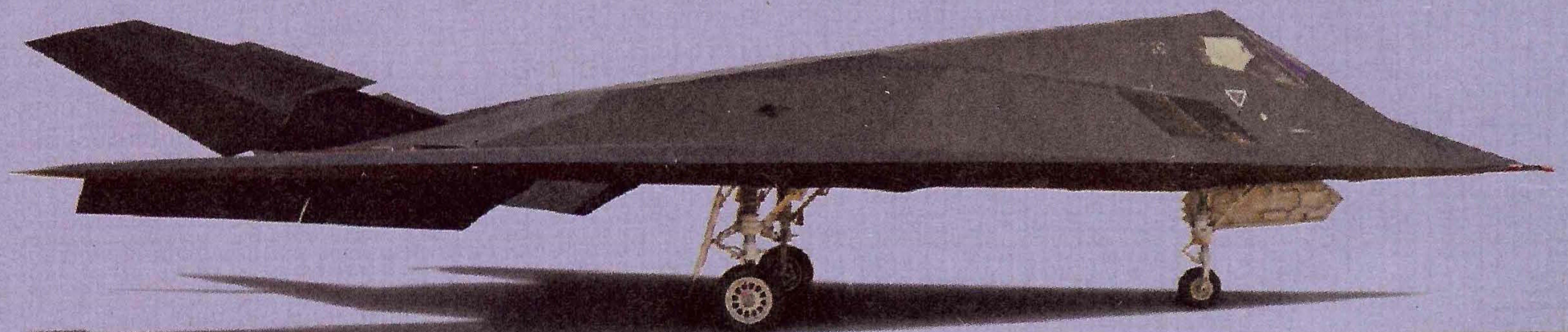
For their annual combat search-and-rescue drill, called Operation TALON EAGLE, Explorers spend three days in the Arizona mountains. Cadets take on the role of downed aircrew behind enemy lines, trying to escape and evade capture and hopefully get rescued by friendly forces.

“We used paint and dirt and branches and anything near us to camouflage ourselves,” says 18-year-

old Anna Mendenhall, also a cadet second lieutenant. “We used our radios to contact friendly forces for rescue, and we used hand signals to communicate with our wingman as we made our way to the safe zone.”

Operation TIGERSHARK is water survival training. Cadets act as aircrew shot down over the ocean.

“Without actually being in the military, we are as real as it gets,” Vick says. “We have to think, talk and act like a member of the U.S. Air Force.”



Cadet 2nd Lt. Gabriel Garza recaps the grueling water-survival drill known as Operation TIGERSHARK.

