

A visit to Defense Visual Information Center, March AFB

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 Subject: A visit to Defense Visual Information Center, March AFB

On Friday, an Interceptor "Away Team" visited the Defense Visual Information Center at March Air Force Base in Riverside, Calif. The expedition was headed by Agent Zero, inspired the online research of our overseas operative, the Swiss Mountain Bat.

The DVIC is the national archive for photos, videos and motion pictures taken by the Armed Forces. There are a lot of pictures of tanks, planes and battle accoutrements, of course, but there is also a vast pool of "soft" pictures, like diplomatic events and local culture surrounding military bases. The archive is a sort of family album for the military, and it is open to the public. Prints of each picture are available at a nominal cost, and most can be reprinted without royalty.

The still pictures are the most accessible. You browse through big banks of index cards, with a 3x5" photo on each, and you can order any prints you want at very reasonable prices. The collection only goes back to 1982, however. Older photos are stored elsewhere and are probably less accessible.

The film and video is much harder to review. Each film is indexed and described on cards, but an expensive hourly fee is required to view it.

The quality of the still photos is stunning. In effect, this must be one of the world's largest photo stock libraries, with enough interesting photos to fill hundreds of glossy National Geographics.

The archive is located on-base at March Air Force Base. Anyone can browse the archive for a \$5 fee for 2+ hours. An appointment is necessary.

For info see: <http://www.dodmedia.osd.mil/dvic>

March AFB also has an impressive surplus store, beside the 215 freeway at the main exit for the base. It is closed Fridays. At the next freeway exit south is the air base museum.

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