

The Acting SECARMY likes the strategy of the Safety Campaign Plan, but says, "we must get the word down to the individual soldier". This was another tough week for our Army....

During the week of 16 to 22 April 2004, the Army experienced 10 Class A accidents -- two aviation and eight ground. The results -- the loss of seven Soldiers.

- * No fatalities within aviation.

- * Ground fatalities as follows:

- Four POV accidents with three fatalities and one permanent total disability

- A Soldier died while taking the APFT

- A Soldier was electrocuted while performing maintenance on a generator

- A Soldier died when an M1 tank lost a track while crossing a bridge... the vehicle fell off the bridge, killing the Tank Commander

- Final accident....A truck in convoy during low visibility swerved to avoid a vehicle to the front and overturned, resulting in a fatality

- * In addition to the 10 reported Class A accidents, we are still working to confirm an additional off-duty POV fatality, two training-related fatalities, a suspected sling load accident and a HMMWV rollover fatality.

- * Bullet summaries of each accident this FY are attached

Tool kit highlight -- aircrew coordination: During the past seven years deficiencies in aircrew coordination have been identified as a contributing factor in over 50% of Army aviation accidents. In the previous three months alone, six aviators and four aircraft totaling \$13.7 million were lost to wire strikes -- pre-mission planning and crew scanning failures.

The U.S. Army Aviation Center (USAAVNC) has teamed with the U.S. Army Safety Center (USASC) to attack this problem. The Aircrew Coordination Training Enhancement (ACTE) is now ready to deploy and provide commanders with a "train the trainer" solution aimed directly at improving aircrew, team and leader coordination. A team of certified instructors from the Directorate of Evaluations and Standardization (DES) will travel to brigades in the field to provide senior instructor pilots the tools to fully implement the program across their formations. The program is Web based, tailor-able and sustainable. It uses proven education methodology and provides tools and current vignettes for trainers to

leverage either in the classroom or in the simulator and will be capable of update by Web download. Information on the ACTE can be viewed or downloaded at <https://safety.army.mil/home.html> and by selecting ACTE Brief under Quick View. Again, this ain't a substitute for good ole leadership and doing the basics right, but is another item in the toolkit.

Vignette -- aircrew coordination: Last week we focused on ground mission planning and troop leading procedures. This week lets look a bit deeper into aircrew pre-mission planning and our ability to respond to mission or environmental changes. The Special Operations Forces regularly conduct complex missions around the world, but do so with one basic premise: do the basic things right. A Good "best practice". As the following series of vignettes show, we need to enforce basic pre-mission standards. A technique is to ensure the entire fuel radius of the aircraft is considered when looking for obstacles and LZs.... then a mission change, enemy contact or bad weather will not come as a surprise. Here are three recent examples:

* A crew conducting routine aircraft movement received a "mission change" to transport personnel in the local area during daylight conditions. ...no additional mission planning was executed. Enroute, the crew deviated from their intended flight path because of suspected enemy activity. The aircraft struck a set of wires... crew scanning did not detect the poles or wires.... a current hazards map with the accident wires marked was in the back of the aircraft.

* Day time Urgent MEDEVAC with a flight of two: While the primary aircraft conducted the ground loading, the chase aircraft flew an orbit nearby that took it down a river bed, where it struck ferry cables and crashed. No updated wire hazards map, nor did they assess the hazards for the mission being flown.

"Pre-mission planning"

* NVG search and rescue mission: While looking upstream for a soldier who disappeared after a patrol boat capsized, an aircraft struck a ferry cable. This occurred after the crew reversed course and was flying back down the river. The mission was identified as a high risk because of a crew duty day extension, but no detailed risk assessment was conducted. The mission was briefed but no pre-mission planning was conducted.

- Day time route recon and security mission: the flight deviated from the briefed area of operations and elected to return to the route down a river bed to allow crewmembers to take pictures with their personal cameras. One of the two aircraft struck a ferry cable and crashed. Although the attaching posts for the ferry cable were readily visible, post crash analysis indicated the crew did not see the cable (scan).

The crews did not update hazard information, nor did they do a risk assessment of the accident area during pre-mission planning.

-- "aircrew coordination and pre-mission planning"

During this next week, I ask each of you to help get the message to our junior leaders: Just as troop leading procedures (recons and rehearsals) are critical for ground operations, pre-mission planning and air crew coordination are key elements to flexibility and successful air operations.

Next week we will take a closer look at POVs and accountability in our formations.

Good stuff on our website to include Flightfax and Countermeasure magazines.

Joe Smith

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